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ABSTRACT

This resource guide was developed to promote the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths, a program of prayer, education, community service, and advocacy with and on behalf of children. The guide provides materials for planning, promoting, and implementing a Children's Sabbath specific to particular faith traditions and recounts the experiences of many congregations and local communities that have already been involved with the program. The guide includes: (1) planning and promotional suggestions; (2) services and liturgical resources for Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, and other faith traditions; (3) lesson plans and other educational resources and practical activity ideas for adults and children; and (4) suggestions for follow-up initiatives to maintain a commitment to children. Following a brief overview, section two of the guide presents messages and endorsements in support of the program. Section three, "Planning and Promoting Your Children's Sabbath," includes planning guides, media releases, and clip art. Section four, "Worship Resources," provides faith specific information for Christian, Jewish, and Interfaith programs, while section five, "Educational Resources for All Age Groups," provides specific lesson plans. Section six, "Children's Sabbath in Action," provides practical ideas for implementing and sustaining the program. Section seven, "Resources for Child Advocates," contains resource lists and evaluation forms. (SD)

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Gifted and Called

to Raise Up Our Children

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About CDF

The mission of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is to *Leave No Child Behind* and to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start*, and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

CDF provides a strong, effective voice for all the children of America who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investment before they get sick or into trouble, drop out of school, or suffer family breakdown.

CDF began in 1973 and is a private, nonprofit organization supported by foundations, corporation grants and individual donations. We have never taken government funds.

NATIONAL OBSERVANCE OF CHILDREN'S SABBATHS 1998

CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND

Gifted and Called

to Raise Up Our Children

Worship, educational,

community outreach,

and advocacy resources

for Protestant,

Catholic, Jewish,

and other faith traditions

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The manual was written and compiled by Marie Quinlan, Religious Affairs Associate and Coordinator of the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths for the Children's Defense Fund (CDF). Many thanks to the numerous congregations whose experiences with the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths in past years have enhanced significant portions of this year's edition.

Many thanks to the following CDF staff for their contributions to this project: In the Religious Affairs Division, Shannon Daley-Harris, Director; Pamela Cary, Administrative Assistant; and interns Amna Husain of Harvard University, John Rohrs of Duke University, and Julie Urda of Trinity College; in the Publications Division, Diane Minor, Director; Anourack Chinyavong, Designer; Elizabeth Reynolds, Managing Editor; and Jennifer Leonard, Production Coordinator.

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This manual contains easy-to-use materials for planning a Children's Sabbath. These materials may be photocopied and distributed without further permission from or payment to CDF. However, if you wish to use materials derived from another identifiable source, please contact that source directly. In addition, CDF would appreciate receiving written notification of your use of its materials. Please send notification to the Religious Affairs Division, CDF, 25 E St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

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Section 1

Welcome to the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths!

In 1998, the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) celebrates 25 years of research, public education, policy development, and advocacy for children. It also celebrates its seventh year of promoting the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths in thousands of faith communities nationwide.

If this is your first experience with the Children's Sabbath program—welcome and look forward to joining a national movement of thousands of religious leaders and millions of local congregation members in prayer, education, community service, and advocacy with and on behalf of children. If you are a seasoned participant and organizer of the Children's Sabbath in your local congregation or community—welcome back and look forward to increasing the momentum and impact of your efforts to care for children.

This year, in response to numerous requests and a survey of constituents, we have consolidated the resource materials into this easy-to-use, multi-faith volume that includes:

- Planning and promotional suggestions.
- Services and liturgical resources for Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, and other faith traditions.
- Lesson plans and other educational resources and practical activity ideas for adults and children.
- Suggestions for follow-up initiatives to maintain your commitment to children.

Our hope is that in addition to having materials for planning, promoting, and implementing a Children's Sabbath specific to your own particular faith tradition, you will also benefit from having access to a broad range of information about how other religions work with and on behalf of children. This manual serves as a guideline, richly infused with the experience of many congregations and local communities that have been involved with the Children's Sabbath program during the past six years. Your faith community can use this information as is or adapt it to fit its special needs. Let these ideas spark your creativity as you plan your events and programs.

This manual is a tool that will empower you to call forth the time, talent, and treasure of all in your congregation: young and old, children, teachers, parents, mentors, child care providers, and community youth advocates, to name a few. The goodwill, skills, experience, and wisdom of these individuals, put into action in the events of your Children's Sabbath, will forge stronger alliances in your community to advance the safety, well-being, and happiness of children.

As your congregation begins to develop its 1998 Children's Sabbath, be sure to affirm the valuable commitments your congregation has already made to children and the work you do to ensure that their needs will be met.

About the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths

Emergence of a Children's Movement

Since its inception, CDF has worked on children's concerns in partnership with leaders and members of various religious bodies nationwide, recognizing the vital capacity in the religious community to provide a powerfully united, moral voice and presence in advocating on behalf of children. From the first, CDF has recognized the moral dimension of the work of child advocacy. This moral imperative has throughout our history made natural allies of communities of faith.

Thus, in 1992, the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths was celebrated for the first time in over 13,000 congregations as a prophetic voice and presence, actively leading our nation to live out the ideals of compassion and justice. Each year thousands of congregations have joined this movement, which is currently endorsed by over 200 religious denominations and organizations. By 1997, 50,000 congregations had joined in solidarity to provide an even stronger moral witness in response to the needs of this nation's children.

A Special Time Set Aside to Focus on Children

Each year on the third weekend in October (October 16-18, 1998), this observance begins with services in synagogues and mosques on Friday evening and concludes with services in churches and interfaith celebrations in communities throughout the country on Sunday. Congregations focus prayer, educational opportunities, community outreach, and advocacy initiatives on the needs of children and committing to help meet those needs.

Each year the Children's Sabbath has a theme. This year focuses on one of the essential charges of our religious traditions: to nurture, love, protect, and care for children. The Children's Sabbaths will highlight the urgent need for affordable, quality child care and after-school programs. This year's theme, **Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children**, reminds us of our responsibility to use and share our giftedness to ensure that every child receives the care he or she needs to grow and develop to their God-given potential.

An Opportunity for the Religious Community to Raise Its Voice for Children

Every day 13 million preschoolers—including 6 million infants and toddlers—are in child care. Too many parents simply cannot find quality child care they can afford. Five million children are left home alone after school and need to be engaged in safe and stimulating activities. This year CDF is engaged in Child Care NOW!, a national campaign to improve the quality and affordability of child care and after-school activities for America's children and families. It is urging communities of faith to join thousands of national, state, and local organizations and individuals in this crucial effort.

Congregations have always worked diligently to provide for the physical, intellectual, and spiritual needs of our children. Through solemn promises we make to children and to God in a bris or baby naming, baptism or infant dedication, through rites of initiation and passage such as first communions, confirmation, bar and bat mitzvahs, through religious education and many more experiences such as social, cultural, and recreational activities, the religious community has lived out its call to nurture children.

Congregations have also taken seriously the opportunity and responsibility to nurture children in programs without explicit religious content, expressing their faith through providing gentle, loving, safe, developmentally appropriate child care for young children, as well as through after-school, weekend, and summer programs for school-age children. *In fact, congregations are the single largest provider of center-based child care.*

For all these reasons and more, the religious community is a vital voice that must be heard in the **Child Care NOW!** campaign. The religious community can speak with moral authority and experience because of its long tradition of nurturing children, its commitment to justice, and its experience providing child care, after-school and

summer programs, and supporting parents in raising their children.

This manual provides valuable information and practical suggestions about how your parents, child care providers, congregation, and community can sharpen their awareness and mobilize greater action in response to the critical need to assure quality, affordable child care for the 13 million children whose parents work and assure safe, stimulating after-school programs for older children.

How You Can Participate

The Children's Sabbath manual provides you with a host of suggestions and a wide variety of resources from which to select, depending on your needs, interests, resources, and time. You may celebrate the Children's Sabbath through worship services in your own congregation or by joining in an ecumenical or interfaith gathering. Religious education programs for children and adults are a great way for congregation members to learn more about children's needs and discover what their faith teaches about them. Children's Sabbath themes can be incorporated into the community outreach or social action activities in your congregation to put faith into action and make a vital difference in children's lives.

Children's Sabbath in Action

Here is a sampling of how others have celebrated the Children's Sabbath in the past and thus renewed their efforts on behalf of children:

- Over 400 children processed into the sanctuary for the Children's Sabbath service at **Christ United Methodist Church in Dayton, Ohio**. The name of a child was written on every bulletin and worshippers were asked to pray for the child listed on their bulletin. The service inspired members, increasing their involvement with the Elizabeth Project, a mentoring program for pregnant teens. In addition, the church formed an after-school program.
- The **Department of Social Action and Public Policy of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism** organized its member congregations nationwide to participate in voter registration in conjunction with the Children's Sabbath. The group provided information during the Children's Sabbath events that would educate congregations on how they can foster increased political interest, participation, and registration.
- The **Ecumenical Council of San Diego County, Calif.**, held its first Children's Sabbath community-wide interfaith worship service and celebration in 1997. It featured a song composed by a local musician especially for this event and performed by a joint children's choir. Youth dancers from a Hispanic congregation also performed. The event included a candle-lighting ceremony to conclude a 40-day candle vigil held by various congregations that prayed daily for their children. Donations of baby food, infant formula, and disposable diapers were distributed to local agencies in need of these items.
- **St. Margaret Mary's Catholic Parish in Naperville, Ill.**, involved young people in various leadership roles in the planning and implementation of the liturgy and the parish's ongoing activities. An information fair featured local and state faith-based and social service agencies that respond to the needs of children. Parishioners were invited to sign postcards to be sent to the governor. Their intention was to encourage the governor to ensure that new federal funds designated for children's health care provisions would be implemented in their state in a timely way.
- **Light a Candle for Children**, an advocacy and prayer project inviting congregations across America to join in "Forty Days of Prayer for Children" prior to the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths, was begun in 1996 by the **Bethany Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Louisville, Ky.** It is now promoted nationwide by the Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) headquartered in Indianapolis.

- The **Stand For Children Coalition of Saint Francis County, in Forrest City, Ark.**, hosted a Saturday evening Children's Sabbath service at the local community college. Eighty congregations representing six denominations participated. Highlights included a youth choir and information tables on drug prevention awareness and other community concerns.

- In addition to a Children's Sabbath worship service, the **New Salem Missionary Baptist Church in Tampa, Fla.**, sponsored a health fair where screenings for vision, hearing, and hypertension were provided. Workshops for youths and adults focused on car seat safety, the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, personal hygiene, domestic violence, lead poisoning, and proper nutrition.

Section 2

Messages and Endorsements

A Letter from Marian Wright Edelman, CDF President and Founder

Dear Faithful Friend of Children:

"Love cannot remain by itself; it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action and that action is service."

These words spoken by Mother Teresa epitomize what we have witnessed over the past six years as thousands of congregations and communities throughout America have participated in the annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths, held the third weekend in October. Through this initiative we have seen the love for children put into action by parents and other relatives, neighbors, clergy, professionals, educators, legislators, and friends. Through prayer, education, service, and advocacy, thousands of faithful individuals and communities have renewed their commitment to our nation's children in multiple ways.

In this our 25th anniversary year, we at the Children's Defense Fund celebrate great progress. But we renew our commitment to conquer the great perils millions of children still face in our rich, powerful nation. Shame on us that we permit children in our country to go to bed hungry, be victims of violence, lack health care coverage, and quality and affordable child care. Shame on us that children are the poorest group of Americans and are abused and neglected every eight seconds. And shame on us that over 5,000 children die each year from guns we fail to control. I hope we will all recommit ourselves to mobilizing with others to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all our children.

In 1998, we seek to respond to the overwhelming parental need for quality and affordable child care and after-school activities for millions of preschoolers and school-age children home alone after school. A working parent in Minnesota described how unstable care threatens her child's development. A Pennsylvania parent shared her struggle to makes ends meet while paying for child care. And a Rhode Island parent spoke of spending 75 percent of his salary to provide child care for his three sons. It is long past time for us to respond to this need. Many religious congregations provide child care. But much more must be done to get the private sector and government at all levels to ensure a range of options for parents seeking to raise healthy children.

This year's Children's Sabbath, **Child Care NOW! Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children**, which takes place nationally October 16-18, 1998, presents an opportune moment to remember that as people of God, we have been given an abundant provision of faith and the ability to put that faith into action. We are called to share that faith with our children and to do all we can to ensure that they are nurtured, loved, and protected. Our personal, religious convictions provide us with the power to do whatever needs to be done to protect and care for those who are poor, vulnerable, and

oppressed. They underscore even more that we have no greater urgent mission than responding to both the blessings and the needs of our children and raising them in a loving, caring, and healthy environment.

People of faith must be on the front lines demanding action for decent child care and after-school activities. As communities of faith, we can join with parents everywhere to pray, act, and advocate for more just investment in our children and working parents in a time of great economic prosperity for some and budget surpluses in many states as well as nationally.

I urge you to join with me and countless others this year in lifting the needs of children over new tax breaks for the individual and non-needy. And I hope you will renew your family and congregation's commitment to spend more quality time with your own children; listening, reading, and playing with them. Join with your neighbors to strengthen community supports to parents raising children. Volunteer at your local congregation or community child care center. Write your congressional representatives and urge them to vote this year for a budget that contains more money for affordable and quality child care and after-school activities. Your prayers, voice, and actions are essential to improving the lives of our children. No individual or congregation can do everything but every individual and congregation should do something.

I believe that through God's provision and your willingness to pray, serve, advocate, and build a movement with others, children will receive the proper care they need to grow into healthy adulthood. I pray that you will continue to share your gifts and lift your voices to God, to each other, and to the leaders of our nation until not one child is left behind, hurt or abandoned and every child flourishes as God intends.

In faith,

Marian Wright Edelman

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National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Office of the
General Secretary

Dear Friend:

On behalf of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, I am pleased to endorse the 1998 National Observance of Children's Sabbaths. The 34 Protestant and Orthodox member communions of the Council have been on record since 1993 as supporters of this valuable effort.

We encourage the 140,000 congregations of our member communions—which embody our concern for children—to join in this observance. In a sense, every Sunday is a Children's Sabbath in our churches. Enter many a church classroom and you will see on the wall a picture of Jesus with a child in his arms, a reminder of the passage of scripture (Mark 9:36-37) in which Jesus tells his disciples, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." As people in congregations, we literally open our arms to children—at the moment of baptism, in our Christian education programs and by offering food and shelter to children and their families at times of great need. And, not least of all, by making child care available in church facilities.

This year, the Children's Sabbath focuses on child care, at a time when the welfare-to-work movement has swept our country. Somehow, in the national fervor to end welfare, the need for adequate child care has been overlooked. If more poor women are to work outside the home, then we must ask serious questions about who will care for their children. Now, more than ever, we must find adequate solutions and be willing to defend them.

It is not an easy task. My own daughter, who is a leading politician in the state of Ohio, paid a high price for writing legislation that established child care centers for poor children. Opponents called her "anti-family" for this effort. I do believe that we need a new definition of "family"—one that makes it clear that *all* children have a legitimate claim on our love and care.

Churches can make a tremendous difference. We are already directly involved through church-operated and church-housed child care programs. In fact, churches provide a primary role as child care providers in the United States. As the NCC policy statement on child care puts it, "Because of the magnitude of the present involvement of local churches in child care, the church has a deep overriding responsibility to initiate, encourage and participate in a national dialogue on child care."

Through the NCC, the Children's Defense Fund and other organizations, the churches have a voice in the national debate. For decades, we have advocated for legislation that would make affordable, quality child care available to all who need it. We must redouble our efforts.

The focus of this year's Children's Sabbath and the commitments of the churches coincide. The Children's Sabbaths provide an occasion for us to reflect on how we are fulfilling those commitments, and its observance generates renewed energy toward the goal of making all children feel welcome. Nothing less than the future is at stake.

Grace and Peace,

Joan Brown Campbell

The Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell
General Secretary

475 Riverside Drive • Room 880 • New York, NY 10115-0050 • 212•870•2141 • Fax 212•870•2817

ARCHDIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Dear Friend:

You can measure the worth of a society by the way it takes care of its children. They are among the most vulnerable members of any community. Jesus knew this and had special love for children. When his disciples wanted to prevent them from bothering him, he protested and asked that the children be free to come to him. He saw in them those most loved by God. We can rightly say that Jesus had a soft spot in his heart for children. Anyone claiming to be a disciple of Christ must feel the same. They are not always lovable but they must always be loved. We have a responsibility toward them, to protect and care for them in a special way.

How have Catholic parishes cared for children? Traditionally we have reinforced family structures where the first nurturing of children takes place. Strong families are very much still needed. We have then been concerned about good education for children. That still remains a top priority. Given the current situation of our country, especially with its large number of poor children and working poor families, we must now do more. The Children's Defense Fund has joined with so many others in raising our awareness of the need for good child care. It is needed more than ever today, especially among the poor, because of the work schedules that so many parents must keep. In the area of child care one cannot skimp. Only the best is sufficient. After-school programs are also needed. Parishes have often extended their usual programs of education to meet these new needs. Jesus certainly blesses such efforts.

Years ago I had the opportunity in a South American country to visit a small school in a rural area. When I naively asked the third graders what they wanted to be when they grew up, I expected the usual enthusiastic responses I had met with in schools I had visited in the United States: a nurse, a secretary, a fireman, an astronaut, a doctor, or a baseball player. Instead, I got blank faces. The teacher explained to me that the children could not imagine such things; their only concern was to find enough food to get through each day.

Later I found out that there are many children like that in our very midst. You and I know that we must do better. We must let children dream dreams. That means that schools, child care centers, and after-school care programs—all of these must be provided by those who care, who love, who support, who animate, who develop the talents of our children. Not to develop all that potential will be a loss for church and society. Helping our children to develop their full potential and to become the adults God intends them to be—that is our task as Catholic parishes who put children first.

The National Observance of Children's Sabbaths is an important opportunity for parishes to raise up the blessings of our children and join in solidarity with people of various faith traditions nationwide, as together, we pray, educate, serve and advocate on behalf of their needs. Blessings on all of you who make sacrifices for children, especially to see that they have good child care. We can do nothing less if we claim to be followers of Christ.

Sincerely,

+Rembert G. Weakland

Most Reverend Rembert G. Weakland, OSB
Archbishop of Milwaukee

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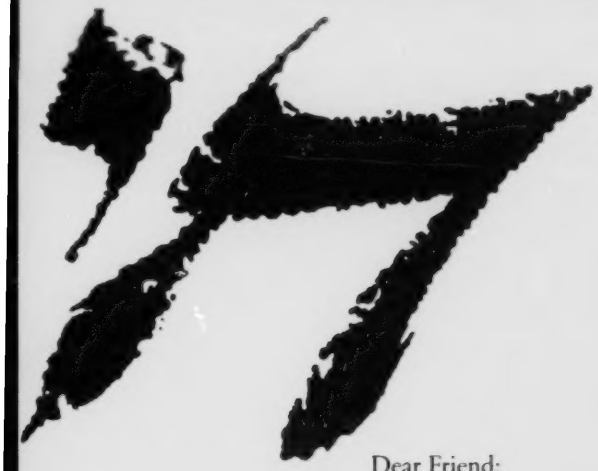

RELIGIOUS ACTION CENTER
OF REFORM JUDAISM

Dear Friend:

I am writing to urge you to take part in the 1998 National Observance of Children's Sabbaths on the weekend of October 16-18, 1998. Each year, the Children's Defense Fund provides resource materials for the Jewish community that include a Friday night service, a sample sermon, educational, community service, and advocacy materials. The focus for this year's observance is **Child Care NOW! Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children.**

Joining with other congregations, Jewish and non-Jewish, across your own community and throughout the nation, in celebrating the Children's Sabbath is a powerful experience and can serve as a catalyst for activating your congregation on the needs and concerns of children. Our many colleagues who annually celebrate the Children's Sabbath can tell you from personal experience the profound impact that participation can have for your community and how helpful the resource materials can be to you. As Rabbi Jonathan Biatch from Beth El Hebrew Congregation in Alexandria, Va., said, "It has contained a lot of inspiring readings and truly aided me to promote the cause of children within a worship context." Many congregations have used the program to become more active advocates for children's issues, such as Rabbi Daniel Komito Gottlieb of Temple Kol Ami in Thornhill, Ontario, Canada, who said, "Last year, for example, this provided an opportunity for us to invite our federal government representative to address the congregation on the government's policy and plans to alleviate child poverty."

The issue of child care is of critical importance, especially right now. With former welfare recipients returning to the workforce or being cut off from federal aid, it is urgent that we expand opportunities for quality child care throughout the country. Empowering the resources that already exist in our congregations, which have long advocated for such child care, often housing quality early child care centers themselves, strengthens the Jewish community in playing a critical role in aiding the development of such a system. The Talmud states that Jerusalem was destroyed because its residents allowed their children to loiter in the streets (Shabbat 119b). We must learn the lesson and prevent the destruction of our nation's children caused by the lack of quality child care.

Taking part in the 1998 Children's Sabbaths can serve as an important catalyst in moving towards these goals. I hope you join with us, and I hope you and yours will have a shanah tovah u'metukah.

Sincerely,

Rabbi David Saperstein
Director

The Religious Action Center pursues social justice and religious liberty by mobilizing the American Jewish community and serving as its advocate in the nation's capital.

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The Religious Action Center is under the auspices of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, a joint instrumentality of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations with its affiliates: American Conference of Cantors, Association of Reform Zionists of America, National Association of Temple Administrators, National Association of Temple Educators, National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, NFTB Women of Reform Judaism North American Federation of Temple Youth

Organizations Endorsing the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Education Department
Akron Area Association of Churches
Alliance of Churches, Ohio
American Baptist Churches U.S.A.
Anti-Defamation League
Antioch Baptist Church
Arizona Ecumenical Council
Arkansas Interfaith Council
Armenian Apostolic Church of America
Arrowhead Council of Churches
Associated Ministries of Thurston County
Association of Churches of Fort Wayne and Allen County
Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
Bergen County Council of Churches
B'nai B'rith International
Border Association for Refugees from Central America, Inc.
Bread for the World
Buffalo Area Metropolitan Ministries
California Council of Churches
Cape Cod Council of Churches
Carbondale Inter-Church Council
Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore, Justice and Peace Commission
Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, Office for the Ministry of Peace and Justice
Catholic Charities USA
Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Social Action Office
Catholic Diocese of Covington, Family Ministry Office
Catholic Diocese of Savannah, Office of Black Ministry
Catholic Diocese of Youngstown
Center for Ethics and Economic Policy
Center for Ministry Development
Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence
Central Maryland Ecumenical Council
Christian Children's Fund
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Christian Communication Council of Metropolitan Detroit Churches
Christian Conference of Connecticut
Christian Council of Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland
Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Church Council of Greater Seattle
Church of Christ in Yale
Church of the Brethren
Church of the Brethren, Atlantic Northeast District
Church Women United
Church Women United in Pennsylvania
Churches United of the Quad City Area
Colorado Council of Churches
Community Ministries of Rockville
Congregations Concerned for Children, Child Advocacy Network
Congregations Concerned for Children of the St. Paul Area Council of Churches
Congress of National Black Churches
Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries
Council of Christian Communions
Council of Churches and Synagogues of Lower Fairfield County
Council of Churches, the City of New York
Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport
Council of Churches of Santa Clara County
Covenant to Care, Inc.
Cross-Lines Cooperative Council
Des Moines Area Religious Council
Dominican Sisters of Edmonds, Wash.
Dominican Sisters of San Rafael, Calif.
Downtown Cooperative Ministry, New Haven, Conn.
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Ecclesia: The Ecumenical Mission of the Capital Area
Ecumenical Child Care Network
Ecumenical Communication Commission, Northwest Ohio
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Episcopal Church Center, Ministries with Young People
Episcopal Diocese of Alaska
Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem, Pa.
Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles
Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts
Episcopal Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania
Episcopal Diocese of Oregon, Education Department
Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, Episcopal Church Women
Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Division for Church in Society
Evansville Area Council of Churches
Faith Institute for Black Catholics
Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot
Florida Council of Churches
Franklin Township Ministerial Association
Georgia Christian Council
Grand Rapids Area Center for Ecumenism
Greater Dallas Community of Churches
Greater Flint Council of Churches
Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches
Hawaii Council of Churches
Illinois Conference of Churches
Inner City Renewal Society
Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center
Interfaith Center for Faith Action and Response of St. Louis
Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee
Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington
Interfaith IMPACT for Justice and Peace
Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston
Interfaith Mission Service
International Institute for Islamic Thought
International Jewish Women
International League of Muslim Women
InterReligious Council of Central New York
Islamic Society of Greater Houston
Jesuit Social Ministries, National Office
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Lexington Theological Seminary
Lincoln Interfaith Council

Lower Bucks Center for Church and Community

Lutheran Social Services of Washington and Idaho

Marin Interfaith Council

Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati

Metropolitan Ecumenical Ministry

Metropolitan Ministry of Southern Nevada

Metro-Toledo Churches United

Michigan Ecumenical Forum

Minnesota Council of Churches

Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference

Missouri Catholic Conference

Montana Association of Churches

Moravian Church, Northern Province

National Black Catholic Congress

National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, Indiana Chapter

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

National Farm Worker Ministry

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

New Hampshire Council of Churches

New Jersey Council of Churches

New Mexico Conference of Churches

New York State Council of Churches

North Carolina Conference of Churches

North Dakota Conference of Churches

North Dallas Shared Ministries

North Snohomish County Association of Churches

Oak Park–River Forest Community of Congregations

Ohio Council of Churches

Ohio–West Virginia YMCA

Parenting for Peace and Justice Network

Pax Christi USA

Peace with Justice Week, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Pomona Inland Valley Council of Churches

Presbyterian Child Advocacy Network

Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association

Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church USA

Presbytery of Cincinnati, Child Advocacy Committee

Presbytery of New York City

Rabbinical Assembly

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

Reformed Church in America

Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

Rhode Island State Council of Churches

Rochester Area Church Council

Rutgers Presbyterian Church

San Fernando Valley Interfaith Council

San Francisco Interfaith Council

San Francisco Religious Council

Santa Clara Council of Churches

Seventh Day Adventist Church, North American Division

Sisters of Charity, BVM, Women's Office

Sisters of the Holy Cross, Notre Dame, Ind.

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Chesapeake Province

Sojourners

Solid Ground Ministry

South Carolina Christian Action Council

South Coast Ecumenical Council

St. Paul Area Council of Churches

Tampa United Methodist Centers, Inc.

Tarrant Area Community of Churches

Temple of Understanding

Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission

Texas Conference of Churches

Trenton Ecumenical Area Ministries

Trinity College, Campus Ministry

Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry

Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

United Church of Christ, Connecticut Conference

United Church of Christ, Office for Church in Society

United Church of Christ, Penn Central Conference

United Church of Christ, Penn West Conference

United Church of Christ, Southeast Association Indiana/Kentucky Conference

United Church of Christ, Wisconsin Women's Committee

United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society

United Methodist Church, General Board of Global Ministries, Women's Division

United Methodist Church, Harrisburg Area

United Methodist Church, Northern Illinois Conference

United Methodist Church, Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts District

United Methodist Church, South Carolina Conference, Board of Church and Society

United Methodist National Youth Ministry Organization, Steering Committee

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

Virginia Council of Churches

Voices for Illinois Children

Washington Association of Churches

Washington Ethical Society

West Side Ecumenical Ministry of Cleveland

Westside Interfaith Council

Women of Reform Judaism

Women's League for Conservative Judaism

Worcester County Ecumenical Council

World Vision Relief and Development

Wyoming Church Coalition

Section 3

Planning and Promoting Your Children's Sabbath

Planning

Whether you are planning your first Children's Sabbath or are continuing your efforts from previous years and are seasoned in this process, the following guidelines can serve as practical steps and a checklist for how to develop your Children's Sabbath.

There is no right way to observe the Children's Sabbath. In fact, the feedback we receive indicates hundreds of unique and effective ways of participating in this moral witness. This year you may be initiating or continuing an observance in your congregation, one with other congregations from your tradition, or an interfaith gathering. Any size observance is commendable. Every effort to strengthen your work with and on behalf of children will make a difference in their lives.

Checklist for Success

✓ **Secure support** from appropriate clergy, congregation staff, or committee and get the date onto your congregation's calendar. *You have people to join you in making this happen!*

✓ **Take the team approach. Call forth the gifts of your community!** Recruit a working group to plan the Children's Sabbath and activities leading up to or following it. Be inclusive of key people in your congregation with the time and talent you need, while keeping the group to a manageable size. Consider inviting some of the following: clergy, congregational staff including educators and musicians; social action committee members; children and teens; parents, mentors, and coaches; and congregation members with professional expertise in children's issues—pediatricians, lawyers specializing in family practice, and child caregivers.

✓ **Healthy leadership is essential. Identify leadership in the group** and assign coordination of activities. Someone needs to serve as the primary coordinator who will delegate and manage the efforts of all involved. Make a list of all aspects of your event(s) and what specific tasks need to be done. Recruit volunteers from every part of your congregation to help prepare for, implement, and follow-up on your Children's Sabbath activities. Ask individuals who are interested and capable to coordinate each activity.

✓ **Convene planning meetings** to:

- Determine tasks and timelines.
- Assign responsibility for tasks and event logistics.
- Assist in the coordination of everyone's efforts.
- Determine resources needed and secured.
- Affirm and support all those involved.

✓ **Communicate your plans and progress.** Be sure to keep congregation staff and members who will be involved, such as religious education teachers, choir directors, and clergy, aware of what is being planned and what their roles will be. Keep simple but good notes as a record of

your activity in order to build upon your efforts from year to year. Develop a follow-up plan.

✓ **Involve resource people**. After your working group has determined the basic format and activities for your Children's Sabbath, call forth resource people from both your local congregation and broader community. You may include: child care providers from child care centers or home providers, staff of community after-school programs, school teachers and administrators, staff from mentoring programs, health care professionals, staff from your local volunteer center, local elected officials (e.g., mayor, state representative), staff from social service agencies responding to children's needs and issues (such as violence, homelessness, hunger, family income), staff of child advocacy organizations, and an interfaith representative body of laity and clergy.

✓ **Always involve children in planning and participating in your Children's Sabbath**. Our children need to know that they belong and are treasured members of the congregation. Have them: Sing in a choir, write letters to legislators, lead prayers or proclaim a sacred or secular reading, plan and participate in a service activity, write and share essays or poems or perform in a dance group during the worship service, design the congregation's bulletin, or display artwork interpreting their thoughts and feelings about a particular children's concern.

✓ **Identify your vision and goals** for the children in your community and across our nation. Developing your vision is a learning experience and can be fun! Set your goals for this year's Children's Sabbath to reflect that vision.

✓ **Determine what activities will be part of your Children's Sabbath**. In addition to the worship service, the following are a few ideas your congregation may wish to implement before, during, or after your Children's Sabbath:

- Activities for education classes—for children, youths, adults, and for an intergenerational gathering.
- Social time before, between, or after the service(s).
- Presentations about children's concerns to the various groups or committees in your congregation such as women's, men's, youth, community action, education, and worship.
- A community resources fair.
- An educational series, community forum, or advocacy initiative on the needs of children.

Remember you have an entire congregation to get involved.

Tips for Planning Successfully

Consider the needs and resources of your congregation and community. Start small and be realistically optimistic. Determine what is reasonable and manageable for your congregation.

Plan to build on your Children's Sabbath. It is critical to keep in mind from the very beginning that your Children's Sabbath does not end with your events on the third weekend in October. Rather the Children's Sabbath serves as an opportunity to refocus and rededicate ourselves to the important work of raising children. The Children's Sabbath serves as a shot in the arm for existing efforts with and on behalf of children, as well as a springboard for starting new activities to meet children's needs. See Section 6 for further suggestions.

Promoting Your Event

Promoting your Children's Sabbath is one of the most important steps in your planning process. The Children's Sabbath is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and educate about the blessings and needs of children locally and nationwide and to call people of faith to action and advocacy on behalf of children. Your Children's Sabbath will have the greatest impact if it is effectively promoted and publicized both within your congregation and to the larger community.

Develop a strategy for promoting your Children's Sabbath events. Whom do you want to reach and how will you reach them? Outreach and invitation make all the difference in your efforts to bring people together. Good publicity is educational and enticing.

Within Your Congregation

Invite congregation members to serve as volunteers and as members of your working group. Ask each of these individuals to invite at least one person or family to your Children's Sabbath.

Use word of mouth and extend a personal invitation. People are more likely to participate if they receive a personal invitation. Additional publicity will reinforce your personal invitation to participate.

Have the clergy or a person on the working group, perhaps a teen member, **describe upcoming Children's Sabbath events during the announcement** time two or three weeks before the observance. Examples of the impact and previous successes of yours or others' Children's Sabbaths will spark interest and lend credibility.

Have the clergy incorporate the Children's Sabbath theme into the sermon each week during the month prior to the Sabbath. The sample sermons in Section 4 can serve as a guide. CDF has a wealth of information and resources about children's concerns for this purpose.

Place an announcement in your congregation bulletin announcing the Children's Sabbath one month before the actual service and events to inform people of the dates and times.

Following the initial announcement, **place a bulletin insert** (sample bulletin insert appears after page 18), giving more detailed information about the purpose and theme of the Children's Sabbath and how people can become involved. Continue to include bulletin inserts each week leading up to the Children's Sabbath.

Include announcements in your congregation's newsletter or Web site, if you have one.

Invite the children and teens to make and display posters announcing the Children's Sabbath throughout the congregation's buildings. They can also be placed in the yards of congregation members.

Reaching Out to the Media and the Community-at-Large

Convince the media that this is newsworthy, compelling and important information. Adapt the sample **news release** on page 17 or develop a **feature article** noting a success story about the children in your congregation or your congregation's response to the blessing and needs of your children. A simple **media kit** describing the Children's Sabbath, CDF, and specific information and a real life story about the needs of the children in your community would be a good hook to draw them into this event. Submit your news release or article to the religious affairs page of your local newspaper and to area religious newspapers or newsletters, including denominational papers and Web sites.

If you have access to the Internet, **visit CDF's Web site at www.childrensdefense.org** for information you can use in developing a news article that will be compelling, informative and resourceful. Also see Section 7 for other available resources.

Contact your local radio and television stations and ask them to publicize your Children's Sabbath events on their **community calendars.** Ask your local newspaper to donate free advertising space for your Children's Sabbath event. Invite the local press, TV, radio, and print media to attend and publicize your Children's Sabbath as a benefit to the community.

Arrange for a local spokesperson or an interfaith panel of speakers to do a radio or television **talk show** program about child care or another issue of concern for the children in your community.

Write a **letter to the editor** about the need for more affordable, quality child care in your community and offer the Children's Sabbath as a resource for involvement.

Take a look around your community and ask people you know about other ways that would work in your locale to involve people in the Children's Sabbath. For example, you might post signs advertising your worship service and events or distribute fliers advertising what will take place and how people can be involved.

Sample Newsletter Article

[Name of your congregation or organization] to Host Children's Sabbath Events

On October 16, 17, and 18, [your congregation or organization] will join with thousands of other congregations across the nation in the seventh annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths. This observance is sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) in cooperation with 200 religious organizations nationwide—including the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, Catholic Charities USA, and [choose an additional endorser from an interfaith perspective]. These events [or this service] will focus on the needs of children and on how people of faith can respond through prayer, education, community outreach, service, and advocacy.

The 1998 national theme is **Child Care NOW! Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children** and will give special attention to how we as communities of faith are raising our children, acknowledging and calling forth their blessings and responding to their critical needs—in our homes, within our congregations and communities, and throughout our entire country. This focus coincides with the Child Care NOW! campaign spearheaded by CDF in collaboration with numerous other children's advocates who are working for increased quality and affordability of child care and after-school programs for our children. The Children's Sabbaths will encourage us all to get involved in our local communities and work to assure that children receive the developmental care and attention they need to grow, learn, and achieve their God-given potential.

At [name of congregation or organization], we will join in this united voice for children by [describe the events or service, who will be involved, giving dates, times, locations, etc.]. Leading the observance of the Children's Sabbath here are [names of several of those who will be involved]. All are invited and encouraged to participate. For more information, contact: [name and phone of contact person in your congregation or organization].

Developing a News Release for Local Media

One of the goals of the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths is to reach a wider, secular audience with a message of the blessings, potential and needs of children locally and nationally and of the religious community's concern and commitment to responding to those blessings and needs. We encourage you to use the sample news release on page 17 as a model for explaining the Children's Sabbaths to your local newspaper's religion or community news editor and as a means of generating a news story.

Call your newspaper to get the name of the religion or community news editor or reporter. Mail the news release to that person in mid-September, about a month before your Children's Sabbath. Follow up with a telephone call a few days later, as personal contact is essential. Emphasize that your Children's Sabbath initiative is part of a growing national movement among religious congregations and organizations to Leave No Child Behind and ensure that every child receives the physical, economic, educational, and spiritual provision they need to live a happy life.

Please feel free to have reporters contact CDF for background information and a national perspective to supplement your own. Contact the Child Care Division to obtain a Child Care Organizer's Kit and a copy of *Locked Doors*, a CDF publication that contains information about child care needs nationally.

Sample Text of News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: [Your name and telephone number]

[Name of your congregation or organization] Joins Nationwide Religious Observance to Highlight Children's Needs for Better Quality Child Care and Increased After-School Programs

[Insert name of your town, state, and date]—On October 16, 17, and 18, 1998, [name of congregation or organization] will join thousands of congregations in [state] and across America celebrating the seventh annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths. Designed to reaffirm the commitment of people of faith to children and to focus national attention on children, this year's Children's Sabbath focuses on the need for affordable and quality child care and after-school programs. The observance is sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) in cooperation with more than 200 denominations and religious organizations nationwide.

[Name of congregation or organization] plans to celebrate the Children's Sabbath by [describe your Children's Sabbath plans, those who will be involved, dates, times, and locations].

The 1998 National Observance of Children's Sabbaths' theme is **Child Care NOW! Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children**. It focuses on the importance of family, congregation, community, state and national supports that children need to thrive and flourish.

Two-thirds of mothers of young children work outside the home—many out of economic necessity. Thirteen million preschool children—including 6 million infants and toddlers—are cared for by someone other than their parents who work outside their home. Fifty-five percent of working women provide half or more of their family's income. Half of American parents with young children earn less that $35,000 per year, and two parents working full-time at minimum wage earn only $21,400 per year. Yet child care can easily cost $4,000 to $10,000 for a single child. The Census Bureau estimates that nearly 5 million children are left unsupervised by an adult after school each week. Juvenile crime peaks between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

"Far too many American children are in poor quality care that may jeopardize their development, safety, and well-being. Low-income children are particularly at-risk," says [a leader from your congregation]. "We know that when we put our faith into action we can respond in an effective way to this problem. We can work to ensure that every child receives good quality care that will help him or her to develop well, enter school ready to succeed, improve their skills, and stay safe while their parents work." The message of the Children's Sabbaths is that everyone—families, congregations, businesses, communities, states, and our nation—has a role to play in assuring that children get the quality care they need.

Marian Wright Edelman, founder and president of CDF, says:

> As people who have been abundantly blessed, we are called to share that blessing in order to make a critically needed difference in the lives of our children. We look to leadership from the religious community—with its long tradition of caring for the health and well-being of people spiritually, emotionally, and physically—to lead and guide our children through this ever-challenging, ever-perilous, ever-promising world. Together, we must proclaim the moral and practical imperative to provide all our children need to live, grow, and learn safely and successfully, and put our faith into action.

Throughout the weekend of October 16-18, congregations of many faiths will engage in special worship services, educational programs, outreach activities, and advocacy initiatives to hold up the blessings and highlight the

needs of children, while calling forth the gifts of the community to respond to the faith-based imperative to love, nurture, and protect children. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship are encouraged to speak out and act on the critical need for increased quality and affordable child care and after-school programs for our children. Children's Sabbaths are a springboard to develop ongoing activities to help children and families become stronger and healthier through after-school initiatives, mentoring programs, and advocacy campaigns.

[Request a statement of support from a local religious leader or elected official with the following serving as an example.]

"I both congratulate and thank every congregation and organization that participates in the Children's Sabbaths. I know of no better way for a congregation to begin or renew its ministry to children than through its service of worship. We have before us today in America an important opportunity to stand up for affordable, quality child care and after-school programs. I join my prayers to theirs in behalf of a nation that blesses its children with all they need to grow in a healthy, happy, and responsible way."

> [Consider including the following mission statement of CDF]
>
> The mission of the Children's Defense Fund is to *Leave No Child Behind* and to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start*, and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.
>
> CDF provides a strong, effective voice for all the children of America who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves. We pay particular attention to the needs of poor and minority children and those with disabilities. CDF educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventive investment before they get sick or into trouble, drop out of school, or suffer family breakdown.
>
> CDF began in 1973 and is a private, nonprofit organization supported by foundations, corporation grants and individual donations. We have never taken government funds.

For more information about [name of congregation or organization]'s celebration for the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths, contact: [insert your name, address of congregation or organization, and telephone].

Make a Difference for Better Child Care NOW!

- **Give a day of work** at a local child care center or after-school program.
- **Help to organize a community-wide Child Care Day**, with other congregations, religious organizations and child care agencies, to focus attention on existing programs and services and how people can find these services and get involved.
- **Sign up as part of a "child care response team" in your congregation.** Volunteers would list available days and times when they could be on call to assist a family with a child care emergency, such as taking care of a sick child when the parent(s) cannot leave work. Set up a phone tree for your response team.
- **Volunteer two hours a week in an after-school program or drop-in center for children and youths.**

Speak Out!

- **Send a postcard** to your city council members, state legislators, and members of Congress urging them to support laws that will provide more affordable child care services and after-school programs.
- **Join with other members from your congregation** to take a more visible and active role in educating, volunteering, and advocating on behalf of at-risk children in your community.
- **Start a child advocacy newsletter or add a child advocacy column to your congregation newsletter.** Get on the mailing lists of several national child advocacy organizations for a steady flow of information. Your own mailing list, as it expands, will provide a good means of communication and a source for volunteer recruitment.
- **Alert local government and business officials** to the need for increased quality and affordable child care and after-school programs and how they can help.

National Observance of Children's Sabbaths 1998

Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children

Our congregation is joining with thousands of other congregations from many faith traditions across our nation in celebrating the seventh annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths October 16-18, 1998. Religious congregations will unite nationally affirming their call to share their time, talent, and treasure to raise up our children. On the Children's Sabbath, people of faith will join in worship services, educational opportunities, service, outreach, and advocacy to learn more about the urgent need for more affordable and quality child care and after-school programs and ways that we can respond as families, congregations, communities, states, and a nation.

The National Observance of Children's Sabbaths is sponsored by the Children's Defense Fund in cooperation with more than 200 denominations and religious organizations, including the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, Catholic Charities USA, and interfaith organizations.

The dates and times of our Children's Sabbath events:

To learn more about our congregation's participation in the Children's Sabbath and how you can become involved, contact:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all His benefits—who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good as long as you live, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Psalm 103:2-5

And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

The Reality of America's Struggling Families

Today in America, 13 million preschool children—including 6 million infants and toddlers—spend all or part of their day being cared for by someone other than their parents. In addition, the Census Bureau estimates that nearly 5 million children are left unsupervised by an adult after school each week and, as a result, juvenile crime peaks between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Two-thirds of mothers of young children work outside the home, many out of economic necessity. Fifty-five percent of working women provide half or more of their family's income. Half of American parents with young children earn less that $35,000 per year, and two parents working full-time at minimum wage earn only $21,400 per year. Yet child care can easily cost $4,000 to $10,000 a year for a single child.

One Family's Story

Gilbert Ayala lives with his 3-year-old son in a single rented room in San Jose, Calif. His wife is hospitalized with schizophrenia. With his wife away, it was difficult for Gilbert to work and care for his son. He lost his job and studio apartment. He is on welfare and three waiting lists for child care help. He and his son visit his wife at the hospital. Children are not allowed on the unit, so the 3-year-old son waves to his mother through the glass door. Gilbert is hoping for child care help so he can get a job and a home to reunite his family.

From the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Dec. 10, 1997

Without child care, parents like Gilbert can remain in an indefinite state of economic dependency, willing and capable of working but not able to hold a job and thus provide for the needs of their children and families.

As compassionate and committed people of faith we are **called** to respond to this urgent need in our community and throughout our country. We are **gifted** with the concern, skills, and resources to reach out in service and advocate on behalf of children and families in need of affordable, quality child care and after-school programs. How will we **respond**?

She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy.

Proverbs 31:20

God raises up the poor from the dust; and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor.

1 Samuel 2:8

Why Quality Child Care Is Important for America's Children

Child care and early education are a necessity for millions of American families. They provide important early learning experiences, which are particularly important for low-income children, who lack the advantages many other children take for granted. Research shows that children in quality child care and early education programs have stronger language, pre-mathematics, and social skills than those in lower quality programs and have better relationships with their caregivers and more positive self-perceptions.

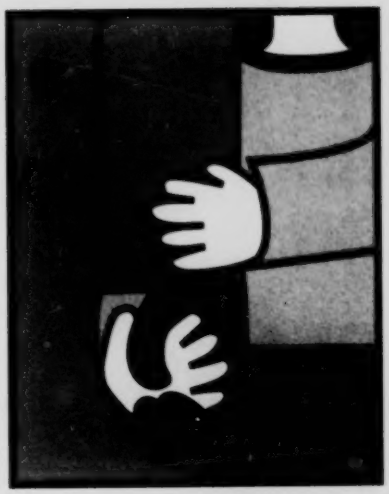
Many children across the nation are in poor quality care and are not getting the early care and education they need to be safe and to get a strong start. Low-income children face particular difficulties in getting the care that can help them succeed. A recent study found child care at most centers in the United States poor to mediocre. It found that one in eight centers provided less than minimum quality care, and only one in seven received a rating of good quality care for children overall.

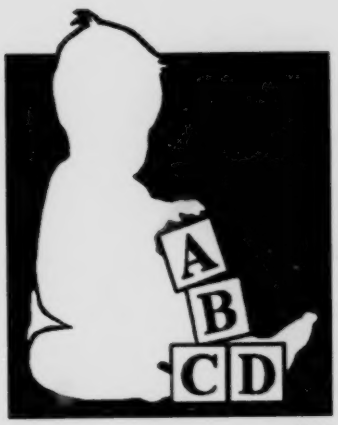
Prayer

Dear God, I thank you for the gift of this child to raise, this life to share, this mind to help mold, this body to nurture, and this spirit to enrich. Let me never betray this child's trust, dampen this child's hope, or discourage this child's dreams. Help me, dear God, to help this precious child become all You mean him to be. Let Your grace and love fall on him like gentle breezes and give him inner strength and peace and patience for the journey ahead. Amen.

By Marian Wright Edelman from *Guide My Feet: Prayers and Meditations on Loving and Working for Children* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995)

Clip Art





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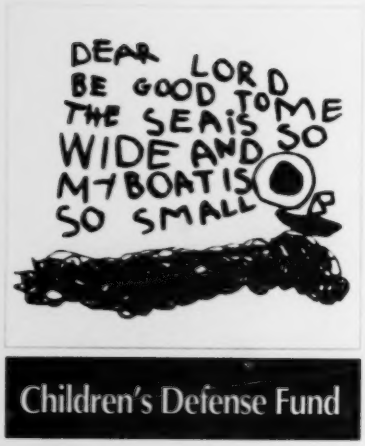
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BE GOOD TO ME
THE SEA IS SO
WIDE AND SO
MY BOAT IS
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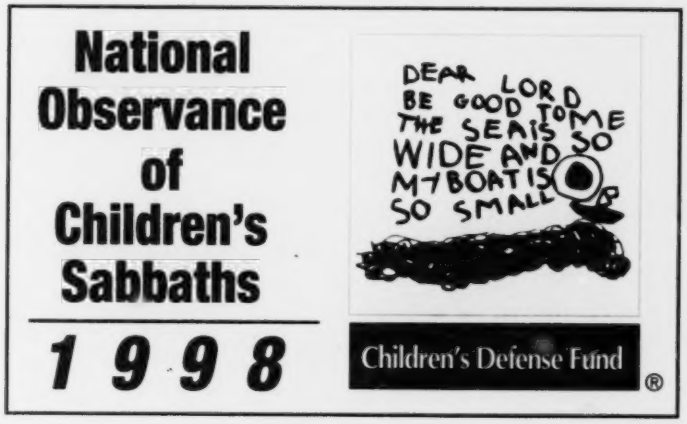
Children's Defense Fund ®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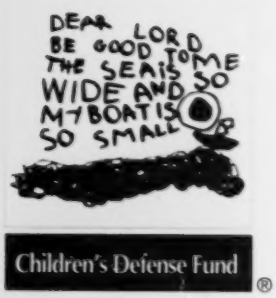
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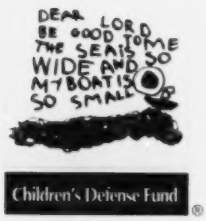
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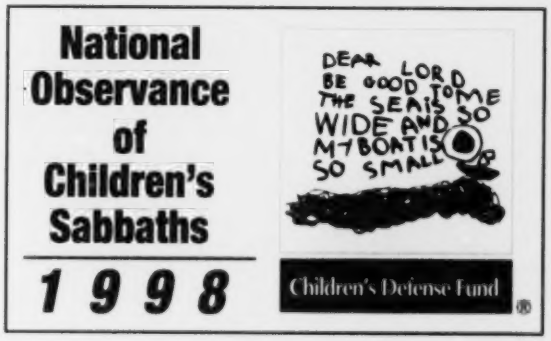
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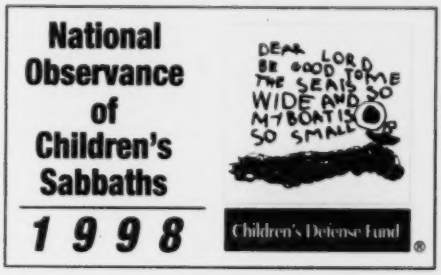
Sabbaths
1998
DEAR LORD
BE GOOD TO ME
THE SEA IS SO
WIDE AND SO
MY BOAT IS
SO SMALL
Children's Defense Fund ®

CHILD CARE
NOW!


National
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Section 4

Worship Resources

Begin with Prayer and Grow from There

As communities of faith, whether we are Christian or Jewish, Muslim or Buddhist, Hindu or Sikh, Unitarian Universalist or Baha'i, we are gifted and called to lift up our hearts, minds, spirits, and voices on behalf of all children in worship to God. From this prayerful posture we extend our gratitude for the abundant blessings bestowed on our children and offer prayers for release from the bonds of poverty, oppression, violence, and neglect, which affect too many of this nation's children. It is our faith and community covenants that provide us with the strength, courage, perseverance, and hope to continue raising up our children to help them fulfill the promise and dreams of their lives.

Whether you will be planning and celebrating a service or liturgy in your own congregation or will be joining other congregations in an ecumenical or interfaith gathering, the following resources are meant to assist you in integrating the meaning of the Children's Sabbaths into the spiritual life of your congregation and community. This section contains extensive materials to guide you, regardless of your focus (see the Table of Contents). Also keep in mind that resources provided for a particular faith community may prove useful to others.

Christian

Liturgical Resources

As you develop your Children's Sabbath worship experiences, whether it is a service integrated into the regular rituals of your weekend worship, an experience of prayer in your home, or one provided for a local community group, draw upon the wealth of liturgical resources available to you from your own denomination as well as from other religious traditions.

Prayer Selections

A Sample Opening Prayer

Beloved and loving God: We come as Your children, open to Your love, grateful for Your nurture, seeking Your presence and guidance. Help us to serve You faithfully, by serving Your children who know the pain of violence, rejection, and abuse. With Your Holy Spirit, comfort us, strengthen us, inspire us as we worship You this day. Remain with us as we seek to live out the coming week as Your family and heirs.

A Prayer of Intercession for Those Who Serve Children

We thank You, O God, for those who serve children and their families: for foster families who offer loving homes; for volunteers who work with a compassionate presence; for those burden lifters who support parents in the care and rearing of children. We thank You for those who dedicate their lives and their vocation to the healing and protecting of children—counselors, caseworkers, physicians, law enforcement officers, and so many others. Be with them. Refresh and renew them. Comfort them in their despair

and frustration. Help us to support them. Let us be grateful and accept all the forms of Your redeeming love. Amen.

Prayers by Rev. Arthur H. Kuehn
The Inter-Faith Chapel, Inc., Silver Spring, Md.
Used with permission of the author.

A Prayer for Our Children

O Creator, in-dwelling spirit from whom we draw life, wisdom, love, and joy. We call forth from our hearts the courage to create a world that brings forth the highest and best for our children. A world that is safe so they may know the joy of laughter and the power of love and to feel the creative energy of the universe flow through their open and receptive hearts, minds, and bodies. We call upon the highest and best within ourselves to love all children and to recognize and seize the opportunity to be a positive example.

We enfold all children in the love of God. We place all children in the light of God. We call forth from within them the power of God. We see in each child the presence of God. We affirm that our children are under the divine protection of the Holy Spirit and all is in Divine Order. In the name of the Christ Presence, we declare this is so. Amen.

A prayer by Rev. Stephen Towles
Seattle Unity Church, Seattle.
Used with permission of the author.

Prayers and Reflections for All Who Care for Children

Loving God, may everything I do begin with Your inspiration and continue with Your help so that all my prayers and works may begin in You and by You be happily ended. I ask this through Jesus, Your son. Amen.

Adapted from the English translation of *The Liturgy of the Hours*
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God, help me to be honest so my children will learn honesty.

Help me to be kind so my children will learn kindness.
Help me to be faithful so my children will learn faith.
Help me to love so that my children will be loving.

Marian Wright Edelman
From *Guide My Feet: Prayers and Meditations on Loving and Working for Children*
(Beacon Press, 1995)

We are not called to be fearful,
we are called to love.

We are not called to be perfect,
we are called to be faithful.

We are not called to be fearless,
we are called to be obedient.

We are not called to be all-knowing,
we are called to believe.

We are not called to claim,
we are called to give.

We are not called to be victorious,
we are called to be courageous.

We are not called to lord it over others,
we are called to serve others.

For it is in serving that we shall reign;
It is through courage that we shall find victory;

It is in giving all that we shall gain all;
It is in believing that we shall find certainty;

It is in obedience that we shall overcome;
It is in faithfulness that we shall find perfection;

It is in loving that we shall dispel fear;
It is in slavery to Christ and His justice
that we shall find freedom, now and forever,
for ourselves and for the world. Amen.

Allan Boesak, a prayer given at the 1989
Meeting of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Seoul, Korea;
from *Peacemaking Through Worship, Volume II*; the Presbyterian
Church Peacemaking Program, 1992. Used with permission.

Loving God, we thank You for the lives of all children who are entrusted to our care. Help us to grow in wisdom, so that we may both love and nurture children, helping to assure that they may attain the fullness of life for which they were born. All this we ask in Your Name, O God. Amen.

A prayer from *Recognizing and Celebrating Children*,
by Congregations Concerned for Children
and CDF-Minnesota. Used with permission.

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Scriptural References About Children

Excerpted from CDF's Bible with Child Advocates' Concordance

Sustaining Ourselves in Advocacy for Children
what does the Lord require of you but to do justice *Mic 6:8*
Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain *Hab 2:2*
Justice and Advocacy for Children and Families
maintains the cause of the needy and executes justice for the poor *Ps 140:12*
seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan *Isa 1:17*
God's Care for Families in Poverty and Need
He raises up the poor from the dust, he lifts the needy *1 Sam 2:8*
bring good news to the poor *Lk 4:18*
defend the rights of the poor and needy *Prov 31:20*
God's Care for Children and Families
Let the little children come to me *Mt 19:14, Mk 10:14, Lk 18:16*
Parents' and Others' Care for Children
if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? *Mt 7:9*; see also *Lk 11:11*
Relationship Between Children and Parents
He will turn the hearts of parents to their children *Mal 4:6*
Children as a Model of Faith
a little child shall lead them *Isa 11:6*
Children as a Blessing
I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you *Gen 12:2*
For this child I prayed *1 Sam 1:27*
Raising Children in Faith
O God, from my youth you have taught me *Ps 71:17*
give them as a command to your children *Deut 32:46*
the boy remained to minister to the Lord *1 Sam 2:11*
Children in Need of Healing/The Death of Children
My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands *Mk 5:23*; see also *Mt 9:18, Lk 8:41*
royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum *Jn 4:46*
Traits of Childhood
Out of the mouths of babes and infants *Ps 8:2*
The glory of youth is their strength *Prov 20:29*
Stories About Children
Moses *Exo 2:1-20*
Samuel *1 Sam 1:19-4:1*
Widow's Son *Lk 7:11-17*
Boy with Loaves and Fish *Jn 6:1-15*
Prayers for Those Who Care About Children
Prayer of Blessing of Children *Gen 48:15-16*
Prayer for Lifelong Protection and Help *Ps 71*
Prayer of Hopes for Children *Ps 144:12-15*

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Commissioning Child Care Providers

The Children's Sabbath is an opportunity to acknowledge and support all those who work with children either in your congregation or community. With this year's focus on child care you may want to plan a special blessing and commissioning to recognize and support individuals serving as child care providers. Consider using one of the following options:

During the Children's Sabbath liturgy or service, call forth those in the congregation who work with children in child care centers, those caring for children in their homes, those who work for after-school programs in your congregation or community, and school staff, faculty and administrators. Have them gather near the altar or remain standing in their pews (depending on numbers) for the blessing. The message from the minister or priest would be proclaimed followed by the prayer and blessing.

Prepare an afternoon or evening of renewal for those in your congregation who: provide child care either in their home or in a child care facility; work with children in a school or community-based after-school program; or lead an athletic, educational, cultural or recreational program for children and youths.You might use the various scripture texts and inspirational readings as well as the music cited in this section. The minister or priest can then share the following message and blessing.

Message from the Minister or Priest

As people of God and people of faith, we hear today that **we are gifted and called to raise up our children**. We are gifted with time, talent, and treasure to share with our children and community. We are gifted with a faith that sustains us, a hope that encourages us, and love that enables us to embrace our children. **We are gifted** with the promise and assurance that our God walks with us and provides for us through every challenge, disappointment, obstacle, and tragedy that is part of our children's lives. We are chosen to be Christ for one another. **We are called**, as the prophet Micah reminds us, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with our God. We are called to raise up our children so that they might live happier, healthier, holier lives.

As child care providers, you have said "yes" in a profound way to nurturing and protecting, guiding and forming, one of God's greatest gifts—our children. You have accepted in a particular way through your work and ministry, a great responsibility to join with others—parents, grandparents, godparents, friends, neighbors, mentors, and so many others—in serving as a channel of God's love and care for the children entrusted to you.

Blessing

Let us pray [choose one of the following prayers]:

Good and gracious God, we pray for these child care providers, asking that You will bless them as they walk with and care for our children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world. May these who minister to children show them that Your ways give more life than the ways of the world and that following You is better than chasing after selfish goals. We pray for these women and men who serve as channels of Your grace, to help children to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start. Grant these child care providers the ability to give children strength to hold their faith in You, and to keep alive their joy in Your creation. We ask this through Jesus, Your son and our brother. Amen.

Adapted from *The Book of Common Prayer, Episcopal Church*

Thank You, God, for those special people who care for the children of others.
Thank You for the love they give our children,
the growth they encourage in the young ones,
the support they give our families,
the way they put the children's needs before their own.
Let these special people know that when they are with the children,
they are loved by the children, their parents and above all by You. Amen.

A prayer by Carolyn Hendrixson from
Recognizing and Celebrating Children
by Congregations Concerned for Children
and CDF-Minnesota. Used with permission.

Exegetical Notes

Rev. Dr. Eileen Lindner
Associate General Secretary for Christian Unity
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
New York, N.Y.

The following notes pertain to the scriptural lessons for October 18, 1998. While each lesson is treated separately below, it is clear that, taken together, these texts strongly urge the teaching and modeling of faith to the young. In poem, prophecy, pastoral, and gospel, scripture attests to the transmission of faith as one of the greatest gifts of life we have to share with our children.

Psalm 119:137-144

This psalter lesson is taken from the very long (176 verses) poem that is Psalm 119. The psalm as a whole is a tribute to the law of God in which this theme is reprised again and again. In the original Hebrew, the poem is divided into 22 eight-line strophes. The first line in each strophe begins with the successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The longest of all of the psalms, each line in it refers to or addresses God. In Verses 137-144 (the 18th strophe) the psalmist reminds the reader that though troubled and small (insignificant), the author finds hope and meaning in God.

Habakkuk 1:1-3; 2:1-4

Habakkuk is the name under which these texts are gathered, but may represent only a nickname. Little is therefore known about the author or authors of these texts that have long been regarded as a part of the literature of the "Minor Prophets." The celebrated discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls included a manuscript of the first two chapters of Habakkuk. This text opens with the age-old question: "How long must I wait?" This will ring familiar with those who have long sought the well-being of children. The text begins with a bold assertion by the prophet that he will take up his station in watchfulness no matter how long it takes. This assertion is met with an oracle from God. The prophet, and we, are instructed to write and proclaim God's vision so clearly and plainly that even those running past in great haste cannot fail to grasp the message—the righteous live by faith!

II Timothy 3:14-4:5

This text is taken from what church tradition has regarded as one of Paul's letters to an individual, in this case Timothy. Much scholarship suggests that the pastorals were actually written early in the second century, perhaps including fragments of Paul's own writing. Whatever the fact of authorship and historic context, the pastorals remain unique in preserving the counsel of a senior clergy to more junior clergy concerning the conduct of ministry in Christ's name. The meaning of the selected texts is Pauline indeed for it urges that there be steadfast adherence to faith rooted in tradition and in sacred scripture. In Chapter 4, the writer conjures up the wonderful image of "itching ears," that is, ears that strain to hear and receive the many false and seductive teachings of the day. Against such temptations, the writer urges the faithful to remember who they are, who their teachers are, and to hold fast to scripture lest they "wander away to myths." For children and youth today, in an age with many and varied claims to truth demanding their attention, they will be strengthened by the community's relentless teaching, by prayer and example, of the importance of faith in God. As in the second century, today too, the "elders" must instruct the young in faith so that they will not wander into myths.

Luke 18:1-8

The parable of the unjust judge and the widow is unique to Luke's gospel. Neither Matthew nor Mark contain this account. The original parable almost certainly ended with Verse 5. The remaining three verses are established to make the meaning clear. This parable pays tribute to persistence in prayer so that we will not lose heart. If even an unjust and corrupt judge could be worn down by the tireless petitions of the widow, how much more likely is a loving God to respond to prayer. A second meaning of the parable is derived from its final verse. If the Son of Man were to return today, would the Lord find on earth people abiding in faith and prayer? Like the widow who sought justice, we are to be constant in prayer and persistent in faith even in the presence of those who do not fear God or respect people.

Practical Application

Taken together, the texts for this National Observance of Children's Sabbaths form a clear and strong mandate to the church to strengthen and maintain its ministry with and for children. Most congregations are diligent and faithful in providing for Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, youth groups, and family programs that nurture children, offer Christian educational opportunities, and contribute to spiritual formation. In fidelity to these scriptures, churches will want to look at a broader range of children's ministries, including children's participation in the worship, social, cultural, community outreach, and service opportunities and programs that serve as part of the livelihood of the congregation. Many congregations likewise witness to children about the loving nature of God through child care that is operated or housed by the congregation, advocacy for public policies that promote the well-being of children, and social justice ministries that respond to children in need.

Catholic Sample Homily

Rev. James J. Greenfield, OSFS
The George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

My favorite true story on the value of persistence is an incident between a young girl and her father. The entire family was gathered at the home of the little girl for a special family event. During the course of the day, the girl, a very determined and persistent 7-year-old, wanted to leave and play at her girlfriend's home. Her many requests were met with a repeated "no, not today" from her father.

Finally, in an act of frustration after she had asked "why"one too many times, her father stated, "Because I'm your daddy and you have to listen to your daddy!" The young girl accepted this pronouncement and quickly enlisted the help of her grandfather. She started off by saying, "Since you're my daddy's daddy, will you tell my daddy to let me go to my girlfriend's home?" This interchange provides us some perspective into today's gospel. Persistence does work!

How often have we been amazed and amused by the unvarnished persistence of young children? In a different setting with different characters, this gospel passage from Luke has a similar dynamic. A recalcitrant judge and a persistent widow. This woman knew she wanted justice from this corrupt judge and when she was faced with refusal she kept asking a profoundly simple question: "why?" We know the end of the gospel story brings justice to the widow because of her faith, tenacious resolve, and unyielding determination. The Lord makes a point that persistence is a hallmark of praying. We are invited to give voice to those dreams and desires in our lives that become the "stuff" of our prayer. The young girl, the woman in the gospel, or one of us might ask, does perseverance in prayer work?

As we celebrate the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths, we are called as a community to remember our children; moreover, we are gifted and then called to raise up our children so that they are heard. We are invited to provide a strong, effective, and persistent voice for all children in America who cannot speak out for themselves. The gospel provides a voice for children to ask that simple, yet profound, question: "Why?"

In our second reading, Paul reminds Timothy [II Timothy 4:1-2]:

> In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is coming to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingly power, I charge you to preach the word, to stay with this task whether convenient or inconvenient—correcting, reproving, appealing—constantly teaching and never losing patience.

Paul's charge to Timothy, a rather young missionary, never to lose patience in preaching the Word reminds us today that some messages need to be repeated over and over again. The Children's Defense Fund's urging for Child Care NOW!, a national campaign, is a clarion call for our community to provide swift justice for children. Child Care NOW! seeks to improve the quality and affordability of child care and after-school activities for America's children and families. Thousands of national, state, and local organizations and individuals concerned about children and families have joined the campaign because too many moms and dads simply cannot find quality child care they can afford.

The statistics are sobering: every day, 13 million preschoolers, including 6 million infants and toddlers, are in child care. This is three out of five young children. Millions more school-age children are in after-school and

summer activities, and nearly 5 million children are left home alone after school while their parents work. The lack of quality child care affordable to working parents prevents children from entering school ready to learn. It hinders their success in school and limits the ability of their parents to be productive workers. Children in poor quality child care have been found to be delayed in language and reading skills, and display more aggression toward other children and adults.

The gospel reminds all of us who bear the name Christian that there are certain responsibilities we have as members of the Body of Christ. CDF reiterates the gospel challenge to Leave No Child Behind. Clearly, the care and moral education of our children is extraordinarily important. It is interesting that Robert Coles suggests in his book, *The Moral Intelligence of Children*, that adults do their most persuasive teaching by example; that it is during "those unselfconscious moments that unfold throughout the day and week" that adults impart the most lasting impressions on children.

The challenge the gospel poses for all of us is to bridge the gap between our prayer and worship and our service to others. There are ample opportunities to work on the perplexing question that is at the heart of the Christian vocation: "Who and how do I love?" To love our children is to care for them. Wendy Wright, mother and theologian, captures the interplay of how the truly extraordinary actions of our loving are usually found in the ordinary. As she explained in one of her articles:

> It has been my habit to look at my children's feet when they are sleeping. This has helped me to cultivate an awareness of their uniqueness, their God-givenness, and to disarm myself of the posture of defensiveness and combativeness that I have created in myself. There are three different sets of feet, each perfect, each expressive of the lifestage and personality of each of my children. . . It is those feet that have taught me the very little I know about seeing with the eyes of love.—From "For All the Saints," *Weavings*, Sept./Oct. 1988 issue. Used with permission of the publisher.

The scriptures invite us to see the extraordinary in the ordinary; in other words, to be persistent and tenacious in praying for and advocating on behalf of our children. To remind ourselves each day that "our children have feet" and bear the footprints of our loving God is the surest way to commit to assuring that every child receives the nurturing needed for full, healthy development, whether from parents, extended family, child care providers, mentors, neighbors, or friends. As with all prayer, it will flow into action and bear remarkable fruit on behalf of our children.

Like the childlike persistence of the young girl in the opening story or the unrelenting requests of the woman in the gospel, we are invited to fashion a community, a world, where our children can have their voices heard and their needs met. As the gospel from Luke challenges us: "But when the Son of Man comes, will He find any faith on the earth?" Let us remember that our treatment of children is a profound measure of our faithfulness to our loving God!

Protestant Sample Sermon

The following sample sermon can be used as part of the National Observance of Children's Sabbath the third weekend of October or at any other time of the year when it would be more suitable to the needs of your congregation.

Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes Jr.
The Riverside Church
New York, N.Y.

Have you ever felt an intense sense of gratitude to God for some special blessing that had come your way? Did you find yourself searching for the most appropriate way you could express such thanks to God?

It happened to me just a few months ago. I was on sabbatical leave and was having a delightful time of spiritual refreshment and intellectual stimulation. I felt very strongly that God had arranged the circumstances to give me a "season of grace." I had whispered prayers of thanksgiving, but I wanted to do something tangible and specific. While thinking about what I might do, a poem formed itself in my spirit, which reminded me of one sure way to bring joy to the heart of God.

Love My Children

I looked around the other day and saw
How truly blessed this life of mine has been
I have health, strength, and comforts
Peace and joy within.

Special care in time of desperation
A helping hand when friends are few
So I asked the Lord, what can I do
To turn some thanks to You.

I expected mission impossible
A call to service far away
But instead this gentle assignment
God sends to me each day.

Love My children, that's all I ask of you
Love My children, it's the least that you can do
If you love them as I love them
We shall see them safely through.

Love yourself, love Me too
And whatever else you do
love My children.

As you noticed in the poem, God calls them "My children" and pleads with us to love them, to encourage them, and to protect them. Perhaps the day will come when you, too, will have a special longing to say "thank you." Here is one of the clearest ways to make sure that your gratitude gets to the heart of God: Love God's children.

No wonder Jesus would not allow His disciples to push the children to the edge of the crowd when He was teaching. To Him they were the centerpiece of the beloved community Jesus had come to announce and initiate. A positive relationship with God could not be sustained if the well-being of God's children was being ignored. Children are "the apple of God's eye," "jewels in God's royal diadem," and "first citizens of the realm of God."

As we seek to show gratitude to God for all the blessings of life, we must remember: God is like a mother and we all know how dangerous it is to mistreat the children of a mother and then seek to enjoy the goodwill of that mother.

The purpose of God is to build a new society that is caring, just, and respectful of the worth of each person. What better way to begin than with children who are so full of life, trusting, aware of their neediness, and open to new possibilities.

There is a very special secret revealed in Luke 18:15-17:

> People were bringing even infants to Him that He might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. But Jesus called for them and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.

No one can enter the kingdom of God who does not receive it as a little child. This suggests that each of us must reconnect with the child in ourselves if we would find favor in the sight of God. When God calls us to love the children that call includes each of us. Oh, how blessed we would be to live in a world where little children and the little child in us would be honored, affirmed, and loved.

Christian Sermon Especially for Children

Rev. Patricia L. Daley
Pastor, Hyde Park Presbyterian Church
Hyde Park, Mass.

I want to show you a very special part of the Bible. This part of the Bible is called the Book of Psalms. [Show the psalms in a Bible, perhaps holding the pages with the psalms together.]

Psalms sounds almost like palms, which are what we carry on Palm Sunday. Just remember, palms we carry; psalms we pray or sing. Lots of times we pray to God in words that are our own words and only our own words. Sometimes we use prayers that others have written, like the psalms. Altogether, there are 150 psalms that we can pray or sing.

Some of the psalms are long and some are short. I'm going to tell you about part of a very, very long prayer in the psalms. Remember that I said there were 150 psalms in the Bible. Well, this one is the 119th. It has 176 verses! *That is a lot of good praying!*

In Psalm 119, the person praying feels small and lonely and a little scared. Maybe there have been times that you have felt that way. But this praying person knows that God is good and that God will help. The "pray-er" says to God, "Give me understanding that I may live."

It really is important to understand. It really is important to live the way God wants us to live. And what is so wonderful is that God sends people to help us understand, people who help us live the way God wants us to live. Can you think of who some of those people might be? [Invite responses.]

Who helps you to understand the stories of the Bible and tells you about Jesus? [church school teachers, parents, grandparents, godparents, and neighbors]

Who teaches you math and science and reading so you can figure things out for yourself? [school teachers, brothers, sisters, and parents]

Who helps you learn how to take care of yourself and do your homework and make things in the kitchen and fix a bicycle or take care of an animal? [parent, grandparent, child care provider, or friend]

Who takes care of you when your parents are working and reads to you and gives you snacks and makes sure you are safe? [babysitter, child care providers, etc.] All these people help God to give boys and girls understanding and love.

I think there are probably some people here in church today who help God to give girls and boys understanding. Let's ask them to stand up so we can see who they are and thank them.

[Invite parents, grandparents, godparents, church school teachers, community and congregation after-school program staff, mentors, school teachers, child care providers, and babysitters to stand up. You might give each a flower or some token of thanks and a round of applause. After everyone is again seated, invite the children to pray.]

> Thank You, God, for taking such good care of us. We are glad that we can learn what You want us to do and how You want us to live. We thank You for the Bible. We thank You for all the people who help us to understand what we need to know. Make us learners in Jesus's name. Amen.

A Catholic Liturgy

Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children

This sample liturgy provides suggestions for incorporating the focus of the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths into the standard liturgy for the 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Processional Hymn

"Gather Us In" (see *Gather Comprehensive*, #744)

Introductory Rite

Sign of the Cross

We gather in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Greeting

Priest: The grace and peace of our ever-present God, Jesus, God's child, and our brother, and the Spirit of hope be with you.

Response: And also with you.

Priest: We have gathered, on this special day for the seventh National Observance of Children's Sabbaths. We join in solidarity with people of faith in thousands of congregations and communities nationwide to raise up the blessing of our children while we heed and respond to their cries of need.

This celebration gives us an opportunity to reflect on how we care for our children and provide them with what they need to grow fully in God's grace. As we gather around the Table of Life, let us listen for God's word speaking to us.

We are gifted and called; we are chosen—to be light and hope and providers of God's grace to our children. How do we care for them? They are hungry for food, joy, justice, safety, and growth. Are we feeding them? They need our time, talent, attention, guidance, listening, and love. Are we there for them? They need to share the giftedness of who they are. Are we helping them to become who they are called to be? Today, we are gifted and called to raise up our children. With God's grace and our acceptance, we will.

Penitential Rite

Priest: In a moment of silence, let us go into the stillness of our hearts and listen to God's call for us to care for our children, near and far. Jesus, it is You who has gifted us to raise up our children according to Your way of truth, justice, and love.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Christ, You call us to prioritize our values, to put our children and families first.

People: Christ, have mercy.

Priest: Jesus, it is You who casts out our fears and fills us with the reassurance that You will provide our children with all they need.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: May our loving God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Gloria "Mass of Light" (see *Gather Comprehensive*, #186)

Opening Prayer

Loving God, You guard us under the shadow of Your wings and search into the depths of our hearts. Remove the blindness that cannot know You and relieve the fear that would hide us from Your sight. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Alternate Opening Prayer

Loving God, bring more of what we dream for our children. You, who out of nothing brought everything that is, out of who we are bring more of what we dream for our children but haven't dared. Direct our power and passion to creating life where there is death, to putting flesh of action on bare-boned intentions, to lighting fires against the midnight of indifference, to throwing bridges of care across canyons of loneliness; so that we can look on this creation of our children, together with You, and behold, call them blessed for all generations, through Jesus Christ, our brother. Amen.

Adapted from *Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle* by Ted Loder, © 1984. Reprinted with permission of Innisfree Press, Philadelphia.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading Exodus 17:8-13

Responsorial Psalm 121 "Our Help Comes from the Lord" (See *Gather Comprehensive*, #119)

Second Reading II Timothy 3:14-4:2

Gospel Acclamation "Mass of Light" (see *Gather Comprehensive*, #188)

Gospel Luke 18:1-18

[Repeat the Gospel Acclamation.]

Homily

[See sample sermons in this section for suggestions.]

Profession of Faith The Nicene Creed

Prayer of the Faithful

Priest: Good and gracious God, we come to You in this moment gifted and called to raise up our children. We are filled with love, concern, and hope for all who are in need in our community. In a special way today, we call out to You to help us raise up the blessings and needs of our children and of children everywhere as we pray.

People's Response (℟.): Help us to raise up our children.

Lector: Our children need our care. Let us pray for our church, locally and throughout our country, that as people of committed faith we will respond to all those children who are hurting. Too many children are homeless and without adequate health care, even more are hungry for food and loving affirmation. We pray that our church will continue to work for the provision of safe and nurturing homes and neighborhoods, sufficient health care, and for food and attention that will build up and sustain their bodies and spirits, we pray to our God: ℟.

Lector: Our children need our care. The violence must stop! Let us pray for our world and in particular, our nation in which we hear every day of children struck down by abuse in their homes, fear in their schools, and crime on their streets. And so we pray now that in our world and throughout our country, this violence will be replaced with healing, hope, and a restoration of peace and promise of a happy and healthy life for our children and their families, we pray to our God: ℟.

Lector: Our children need our care. Let us pray in gratitude and hope for all those who share their love and giftedness in caring for our children; parents, stepparents, single parents, mentors, grandparents, foster parents, teachers, godparents, youth program coordinators, babysitters, child care providers, neighbors, and friends. That they will be nourished and renewed in their commitment to loving each child entrusted to our care, we pray to our God: ℟.

Lector: Our children need our care. Let us pray in a special way for our parish, community, and state and national leaders that they will be open to God's guidance in their leadership. Our communities and nation need life-giving values that ensure that every child has a *Healthy Start, Head Start, Fair Start, Safe Start,* and *Moral Start* in life, and that we Leave No Child Behind, we pray to our God: ℟.

Lector: Let us pause for a moment and lift up our individual prayers for children who have died in our families, our parish, our neighborhood, and throughout our country [you may invite members of the parish to mention the

names of these children aloud]. We pray in gratitude for the love they brought to our lives as well as for the healing of their loved ones and caregivers who mourn their loss. We are grateful for Your eternal loving embrace of our children, we pray to our God: ℟.

Priest: All-loving God, full of care and compassion, we are grateful that You have gifted us and called us to raise up our children. We trust that as we journey through our days, You walk with us in hope, courage, confidence and competence. We pray that You will keep us faithful to Your call that we may be instruments of Your love and peace as we care for our children. We have asked all of this through Jesus, provider of Your loving care.

All: Amen.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Offertory Song "Take This Moment" (see *Gather Comprehensive*, #673)

Offertory Procession Presentation of the Gifts

[You may want to invite some of the following to present the gifts at the altar: a staff person from the parish or a community child care center with two or three children who receive care at the center, a child with a disability and his/her parent(s), two young people representing their involvement in either a parish or community after-school program, a family with children who are cared for in their own home.]

[The following is a suggestion for how the gifts may be presented at the altar. Two of the adults could carry the altar cloth and place it on the altar, another young adult/adult could light the candles at the altar, others would present the bread and wine, the children could present symbols of their child care experience (e.g., a toy, a book, symbols they have made of love, safety, and nourishment). As each approaches the altar, they would then turn and face the congregation and dedicate their particular gift being brought to the altar to a particular child or child care provider by name.]

Preparation of the Gifts

Eucharistic Prayer IV

Sanctus "Mass of Light" (see *Gather Comprehensive*, #190)

Memorial Acclamation "We Remember" (see *Gather Comprehensive*, #593)

Great Amen "Mass of Light" (see *Gather Comprehensive*, #194)

The Lord's Prayer

Sign of Peace

[The priest or deacon may want to call all the children present in the congregation to come forward for a special "peace prayer." A half dozen of the older children in the parish could be asked beforehand to prepare a one-sentence peace prayer for the children of our nation. They would offer these prayers aloud at this time. The priest or deacon could then bless each of the children before they return to their seats. The entire congregation would then offer each other the sign of peace.]

Breaking of the Bread

Agnus Dei "Mass of Light"
(see *Gather Comprehensive*, #195)

Communion Hymn "Guide My Feet"
(see *Gather Comprehensive*, #707)

Reflection

As we consider the many ways in which we have been gifted and called to care for our children, as well as the many challenges that lie before us, the many ways we have forgotten and neglected to give our children what they need, the fears we have for the safety of our children, and the lack of confidence we have in our own ability to love them, let us pause and reflect on this prayer to our good and gracious God.

O God, help us to recover our hope for our children's sake.
Help us to recover our courage for our children's sake.
Help us to recover our discipline for our children's sake.
Help us to recover our ability to work together for our children's sake.
Help us to recover our values for our children's sake.
Help us to recover a spirit of sacrifice for our children's sake.
Help us to recover our faith in Thee for our children's sake.
Amen.

From *Guide My Feet: Prayers and Meditations on Loving and Working for Children*
by Marian Wright Edelman (Beacon Press, 1995)

Concluding Rite

Final Blessing

Dismissal

Our liturgy is ended, let us go in peace, remembering that we are gifted and called to raise up our children and recommitted in our love for them. Thanks be to God.

Closing Hymn "Anthem" (see *Gather Comprehensive*, #690)

An Episcopal Liturgy

Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children

Proper 24 Pentecost 22

Rev. Dwayne Dawson
Director, Southern California Sanctuary for Children
Pasadena, Calif.

All hymns cited are from the 1982 edition of the Episcopal Hymnal.

Preparation for Worship in God's Name

[As the people gather before the service begins, the following prayer is an appropriate one for meditation for the Children's Sabbath.]

All the Children

Lord, I find myself unable to forget the children—
the children who live in cardboard shelters,
the children whose starving eyes look out at us from photographs,
who die of neglect and hunger and minor illnesses,
the children who do not know family stability,
the children who are born to be our hope,
who deserve food and shelter and clothing and love
simply because they are living human beings.

These children are my children
wherever they are, whoever they are,
whatever their parents have done or not done.
All children are part of my family because all children belong to You.
Lord, help me to meet the needs of children everywhere.

Children cannot control their world;
they are dependent upon those of us who care for them.
Children need us to nurture them so that some day
they will be strong enough to sustain this ever-changing world.

Help me to love my family, to provide adequately for them,
but also to remember my responsibility to the human family.

By Judith Mattison from *Prayers from a Mother's Heart* (Augsburg Fortress, 1975). Used with permission of the author.

Voluntary

Hymn "All Things Bright and Beautiful," #405, or "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God," #293

Opening Sentences [standing]

Responsive Reading

Minister:	In every birth
People:	Blessed is the wonder.
Minister:	In every creation
People:	Blessed is new being.
Minister:	In every child
People:	Blessed is life.
Minister:	In every hope
People:	Blessed is the potential.
Minister:	In every transition
People:	Blessed is the beginning.
Minister:	In every existence
People:	Blessed are the possibilities.
Minister:	In every love
People:	Blessed are the tears.
Minister:	In every life
People:	Blessed is the love.

Minister and People: And in our lives, blessed are our children and the renewal and fulfillment given to our family circle.

A Jewish blessing from a brit milah or naming ceremony

Song of Praise [Remain standing.]

Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God in the highest. Glory to God, Glory to God, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Collect of the Day

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Minister: Let us pray. [Remain standing; silence is kept.]

Minister and People: O God, Whose son Jesus is the good shepherd watching over us in tender love: help us to know His voice when He calls each of us by name and to follow where He leads us in His loving ways; who, with You and the Holy Spirit lives in us and through us, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lesson Genesis 32:3-8 and 22-30 or II Timothy 3:14-4:5

Hymn "One Pair of Hands," Verses 1-3

[Standing, everyone sings.]

Gospel Drama Jesus Blessed the Children: A Dramatization of Luke 18:15-17

[Invite children, parents and child care providers to play the parts of Jesus, the children, the disciples, and the crowd.]

Hymn "One Pair of Hands," Verses 4-6

[Standing, everyone sings.]

Sermon

[Delivered in the midst of the children in the chancel. For suggestions, see exegetical notes and sample sermons in this section.]

The Nicene Creed

The Prayers of the People [standing]

Minister: We pray for all those who have requested our special prayers this morning.

[Name those with special needs.]

People: Hear our prayers, O Lord.

The following responsive prayers were written by the young people in the Seekers Group at All Saints Episcopal Church, Pasadena, Calif.

Minister: God, unite all people as one so that we can know how we are connected by Your love.

People: Help us to spread Your love.

Minister: Let the powers that be have the strength and courage to guide us, and help those in our nation who do not have a voice.

People: Let our voices be heard.

Minister: Watch over all who are without, especially the children, and all who must fight to preserve themselves and their families.

People: Strengthen us, Lord.

Minister: Make schools a safe place where we're not afraid, and let us never stop learning.

People: Grant us courage and fill us with knowledge.

Minister: Bless all child care providers and help us to make sure that every child has good, quality child care.

People: Bless us, O Lord.

Minister: Lead our communities in the effort to provide safe and stimulating after-school programs for all children and youth.

People: Lead us, O Lord.

Minister: Give us positive motivation to overcome stress in school, at home, and in all that we do.

People: Show us the way.

Minister: Help us to be in harmony with our surroundings and to embrace our neighbors.

People: Show us the power of love.

Minister and People: Thank You, God. Amen.

The Peace

Greetings

The Holy Communion

Offertory Anthem "Tis a Gift to Be Simple," #554 [seated]

For the Presentation

Hymn "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow," #380 [Standing, everyone sings.]

The Presentation of the Bread and Wine

The Offering of Commitment and Energy

Minister: Who will provide a spiritual home for our children and youth, enabling them to experience the comfort, support, and safety of a loving church community?

People: We will provide a spiritual home for the children and youth.

Minister: Who will speak for the children in our community and across the world who are bruised by the violence of poverty, abuse, and neglect?

People: We will be a voice opposing every form of violence against children.

Minister: Who will advocate for the emotional and physical health and the economic and educational well-being of every child?

People: We will advocate for the health and well-being of every child.

Minister: We affirm that both the children within and those beyond the walls of our church are our responsibility. With the commitment to Leave No Child Behind, let us affirm that this church will seek to provide sanctuary for all children.

People: We the members and friends of this church, reaffirm our commitment to providing sanctuary for all children and we commit to Leave No Child Behind.

The Great Thanksgiving [with the children gathered around the table]

Minister: God invites you to this holy meal.

People: We come to the table with thankful hearts.

Minister: Holy One, Creator of life, we offer You thanks for the gift of children. We pray that all children may have cause in life to rejoice, may share in the fruits of Your creation, and may grow into the persons You are calling them to be.

Now we offer our praise to You in song:

Sanctus/Benedictus [Remain standing; everyone sings.]

The Consecration

Minister: Gracious God, we thank You for showing Your love for us by sending Your child, Jesus, to grow up in a family surrounded by a community of faith, to know the joys and challenges we have in our own families. Jesus cared about children. He drew them to Him, held them in His arms, and told them stories. Jesus said we could enter the reign of God only as a little child.

One night after supper, Jesus took a piece of bread. He said the blessing, broke the bread, and shared it with everyone around the table. He said, "Take this bread, and as you eat it, remember Me."

Then Jesus took the cup of wine. He gave thanks to God and passed the cup around the table. He said, "Take this wine, and as you drink it, remember Me."

Minister and People: Thank You, God, for the gift of Your child, Jesus. Thank You for this bread and wine that You make holy. Thank You for Your invitation to enter Your reign as a child.

Minister: God of love, we ask You to bless this bread and this wine with Your empowering spirit.

Minister and People: We ask You to bless us also, so that, together, we may each play a part in bringing to life this great vision of a sanctuary for children. Challenge us, nourish us, guide us, for the sake of the children, for the sake of the human family, for the sake of the world. In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

The Breaking of the Bread

The Invitation

Hymn "Let Us Break Bread Together," #325, or "Seek Ye First," #711

Intercessions

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Orison "God Bless the Children"
[From the compact disc *The Woman in Me*, Polygram Records, Inc., 1995; words and music by Shania Twain and John Lange]

The Blessing

Hymn "For the Beauty of the Earth" #416

The Dismissal

Minister: Let us go forward today open to the guidance of God's spirit.

People: In the voices of children, of our teachers, friends and leaders, and of our own hearts.

Minister: Let us go forward on behalf of children everywhere!

People: Amen and Amen!

Voluntary

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A Protestant Service

Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children

Sunday, October 18, 1998

Shannon Daley-Harris
Director, Religious Affairs Division
Children's Defense Fund
Washington, D.C.

The music cited throughout the service may be found in the following hymnals: Presbyterian Hymnal; United Methodist Hymnal; New Century Hymnal of the United Church of Christ; Lutheran Book of Worship; Singing the Living Tradition of the Unitarian Universalist Association; and the African Methodist Episcopal Church Hymnal. The call to worship may be read in various ways: responsively by alternating lines, in unison by all, in parts by different individuals, or antiphonally, alternating between left and right sides of congregation. Depending on which option you select, make appropriate notation in your worship bulletin.

Call to Worship

God has gifted us, young and old and in-between.
God has gifted us, black and brown and white and golden.
God has gifted us, male and female.
God has gifted us to respond to God's call:
to raise up our children,
to strengthen families,
to work for justice,
to serve with compassion.
to walk faithfully with our God.
Come, let us worship the God who has gifted and called us.

Hymn of Praise "God Is Here!," "Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather," or "For the Beauty of the Earth"

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, we confess that we too easily lose sight of Your vision for our children. We grow accustomed to the status quo and set aside the call for justice. We become weary and discouraged when our efforts don't seem to bring change and are tempted to give up. We admit that when faced with problems that don't seem to go away, with solutions that don't seem to work, we are too ready to doubt You, ourselves, and even those we are trying to help. We want justice, but we resist the hard work, challenge, risk, and patience it requires. We want fast results and easy answers. Forgive us for our impatience, for our fickle attention, our half-hearted efforts. Renew in us Your vision for Your children. Strengthen in us the will to be Your partners in bringing that vision to reality.

Assurance of Pardon

[Select one from your worship book or tradition.]

Hymn "Christ Has Called Us to New Visions"

Children's Sermon

[See sample sermon for children on page 33.]

Prayer for Illumination

Gracious God, help us to listen for Your word to us today
with the openness and trust of a child
with the questioning mind of a youth
with the discerning heart of one grown to maturity
with the wisdom of one seasoned by years.

First Reading Habakkuk 1:1-3, 2:1-4

[This and three following readings are drawn from the Revised Common Lectionary for the 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, which falls on October 18, 1998. Congregations that do not follow the Revised Common Lectionary or congregations that are celebrating the Children's Sabbath on an alternate date may wish to select different texts.]

Reading Psalm 119:137-144

Second Reading II Timothy 3:14-4:5

Anthem

Gospel Reading Luke 18:1-8

[You may want to present the gospel reading as a drama, especially if the children are remaining throughout the worship service. Perhaps have the youths prepare a modern-day version of the gospel reading to enact, with a young person, child advocate, or parent in the role of the widow and a legislator in the place of the judge.]

Sermon

[See exegetical notes and sample sermons earlier in this section.]

Hymn "God of Justice, God of Mercy," "Called as Partners in Christ's Service," or "Be Thou My Vision"

Affirmation of Faith

[Select one from your tradition that most closely relates to the day's theme.]

Other Liturgical Responses to the Word

[According to your tradition, one or more of the following may be incorporated into the service: Baptism, Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, Commissioning, Act of Commitment.]

Act of Commitment

Leader: Write the vision, make it plain!

People: We dedicate ourselves to spreading God's vision for our world.

Leader: "And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets." (Zechariah 8:5)

People: We will work and pray for the day when all children may safely revel in the joys of childhood.

Leader: "No more shall the sound of weeping be heard in [the city] or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days or an old person who does not live out a lifetime." (Isaiah 65:20a)

People: We will work and pray for the day when children receive the care they need for health and well-being, and all live to see the fullness of years.

Leader: "The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." (Isaiah 11:6)

People: We will work and pray for the day when the gifts and leadership of children are celebrated and honored, and children lead all of us in the way of peace.

Leader: "May our sons in their youth be like plants full grown, our daughters like corner pillars, cut for the building of a palace." (Psalm 144:12)

People: We will work and pray for the day when all young people have the care and guidance they need to flourish to their potential and lead lives of strength and stability.

Leader: "For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seem to tarry, wait for it: it will surely come, it will not delay." (Habakkuk 2:3)

Anthem

Prayers of the People

Almighty God, Jesus reminded us to pray always and not to lose heart. So we turn to You in prayer.

We pray that Your spirit will infuse the church everywhere to let the little children come, nurturing them in spirit, mind, and body, teaching them of God's love. God of tenderness,

People's Response (℟.): Hear our prayer.

We pray for our nation and those who govern, for our community and its leaders, that we may become a better reflection of Your concern for the poorest, weakest, youngest, and most vulnerable. God of the weak and the mighty: ℟.

We pray for children who do not receive the safe, nurturing care they need, and pray that we will work as families, congregations, communities, and as a nation to see that every child is cared for. God of justice: ℟.

We pray for young people, especially those who are left to their own devices without adequate guidance, that all might find opportunities to develop and use their gifts, and that all may grow and flourish with the steady guidance and support of caring adults in their families, congregations, and communities. God of guidance: ℟.

We remember especially those parents who struggle to raise their children without adequate resources or support, and pray that we may find ways individually, as a church, community, and nation to share our gifts and respond to the call to strengthen and support parents and children. God of compassion: ℟.

We pray for all who suffer in mind, body, and spirit. We pray for those who grieve the loss of loved ones, that they may find comfort in your promise that nothing—neither life nor death—can separate us from your love. God of mercy:

For Jesus's words of assurance that You will help those who turn faithfully to You in prayer, we give You thanks. Amen.

The Lord's Supper

[Congregations that will be celebrating the Lord's Supper should include the appropriate liturgical material.]

Hymn "Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service"

[Alternative Suggestions: "The Call to Be God's People," "There's a Spirit in the Air," "God, Whose Giving Knows No Endings," "Help Us Accept Each Other," and "Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak"]

Charge and Blessing

Proclaim the message: "Each one of us is a child of God meant to live life fully. God calls us to care for one another, just as God cares for us." Be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching.

> And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
> the love of God,
> and the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit,
> be with you and with each child
> now and ever more. Amen.

Jewish

Suggestions and Resources for the Service

Services on the Children's Shabbat are an excellent opportunity to help focus the congregation on the links between biblical texts, Jewish traditions, and advocating for children and quality, affordable child care. They also serve as an opportune moment to affirm the good work of your congregation's care of children and to challenge members to continue to respond to the needs of children locally and nationally.

The following suggestions will assist you in planning your own unique Children's Shabbat service or supplementing your congregation's weekly prayer and discussions.

- Involve the children and youths in the service.
- Focus the sermon, D'var Torah, or Torah discussion on children, child care, and our responsibility to advocate for quality child care for all children. Use the following sample sermon or textual passages to help you.
- Invite a professional from a local child care center or after-school program to give the sermon.
- Honor congregation members who are child care providers. Ask them to lead certain prayers or give them Aliyot during the Torah reading.
- Collect tzedakah to benefit a child care or after-school program.

Passages from the Torah, Prophets, and Talmud

On the Importance of Children

And Israel beheld Joseph's sons and said, "Whose are these?" And Joseph said to his father, "These are my children, whom the Lord has given me in this place." And he said, "Bring them to me, and I will bless them."

Genesis 48:8-9

Thus said the Eternal: A cry is heard in Ramah, wailing, bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, who are gone. Thus said the Eternal: Restrain your voice from weeping, your eyes from shedding tears; for there is reward in your labor—declares the Eternal. They shall return from the enemy's land, and there is hope for your future—declares the Eternal, and your children shall return to their country.

Jeremiah 31:15-17

When the children are blessed, the parents by this very token are blessed.

Zohar, i, 227b

The accursed Emperor Hadrian was once walking along the road to Tiberias when he saw an old man standing and cutting down shrubs in order to plant saplings. He said to him, "Old man! Old man! What is your age?" He answered, "One hundred." "You are one hundred years old and you stand here cutting down trees in order to plant saplings? Do you think you will eat of their fruits?" He replied, "If I am worthy, I shall eat: if not, just as my parents toiled for me, so shall I toil for my children."

Kohellet Rabba

Rabbi Meir said: When the Israelites came to receive the Torah, God said to them, "Bring me good sureties that you will observe it." They answered, "Our ancestors shall be our sureties." God replied, "Your sureties need sureties themselves. I have found fault with them." They answered, "Our prophets shall be our sureties." God replied, "I have found fault with them also." Then the Israelites said, "Our children will be our sureties." They proved acceptable, and God gave Israel the Torah.

Shir HaShirim Rabbah

On the Importance of the Care of Children

Take care of the children of the poor, for they will be the ones who advance knowledge.

Nedarim, 81a

The guardians of a city are the teachers of the young and the instructors of the old. . . If you see cities uprooted, know that it came about because they did not maintain their teachers' salaries.

Hagiga 1:7

Whoever teaches a neighbor's child Torah earns a seat in the Academy on High.

Metzia 85a

In Rab's day, there was a teacher whose prayer for the rain was answered promptly. When asked to tell of his special merit, he said, I teach children of the poor as well as of the rich, I accept no fee from any who cannot afford it, and I have a fishpond to delight the children and to encourage them to do their lessons.

Taanit 24a

Even if neighbors complain from the noise, they cannot shut down a school that teaches children. Raba said, this refers to Joshua ben Gamla, for without his ruling, Torah would have been forgotten in Israel.

Baba Batra 20b-21a

In his day, if one had a learned father, the father would teach, and if not, one did not learn. Then they instituted a publicly funded school in Jerusalem. But those with parents were brought up to Jerusalem, and those without still did not learn. They then set up a school in each district, and the children were to enter at 16 or 17, but when the teachers tried to discipline them, they rebelled and left. They then instituted publicly funded schools for any child six or older. And if there was a long way, or a bridge to cross, they could compel the town to build another school.

Baba Batra 21a

[Why was there violence in Gilead?] Because they made what is primary secondary and what is secondary primary. How so? Because they loved their possessions more than their own children.

Midrash Tanhuma, Mattot

On Social Justice

Speak up for [those unable to speak], for the rights of all the unfortunate. Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and needy.

Proverbs 31: 8-9

And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the result of righteousness shall be quietness and confidence forever.

Isaiah 32:17

Suggested Music for the Erev Shabbat Service

"And the Youth Shall See Visions" by Debbie Friedman: Contact Sounds Write Productions, Inc., San Diego, Calif., or call 619-697-6120.

The following suggestions appear in *Shireinu: Our Songs*, available from Transcontinental Music Publications by calling 1-800-455-5223.

- "Ani V'Atah" by Arik Einstein
- "Kaddish D'Rabbanan" by Debbie Friedman
- "Hineh Mah Tov," a traditional folk song
- "The Dreamer" by Lorre Wyatt

Jewish Sample Sermon

Rabbi Jack Moline
Agudas Achim Congregation
Alexandria, Va.

This weekend, the Children's Defense Fund is asking congregations of all faiths to participate in the seventh annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths to help us all focus on issues affecting children and rededicate ourselves to their care. So, it is appropriate to address a few remarks to what is an obvious matter for us—children, and to what is not such an obvious matter—child care.

Not one of us would quarrel with the emphasis our tradition places on children. In a sense, the world was created for children, as we learn from this week's Torah portion. After all, the very first instruction given to the newly formed earthlings is to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with others. This was the garden of Eden.

For reasons not hard to understand, it has long been assumed that the primary responsibility for child-rearing is in the hands of the parents of those offspring. Therefore, much of our tradition emphasizes the value of family life. On the first tablet of the Ten Commandments, the only one that deals with human relations, is the commandment to honor one's father and mother. A great deal of discussion takes place in commentaries and legal literature about the obligations of a child to respect a parent. Underlying those discussions is an assumption that parents make more than a biological contribution to the life of their child.

Remarkably little space, however, is devoted to the discussions of basic parental duties in comparison to less commonsensical hallmarks of Jewish life, such as tzedakah or prayer. The presumption of psalmist and prophet alike is that the inclination of a parent is to care tenderly for a child. How often do we depict the relationship between God and Israel in the words of Psalm 103, "Tender as a father with his children is the Lord with His worshippers." How much comfort do we take in the certainty of the words of Isaiah, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, can she not have compassion of the child of her womb? Yet even they will be forgotten before I [God] will forget you."

The depth of parent's devotion to children is immeasurable. In the midst of the startling realities of childhood deprivation in our country, we know that the majority of parents are loving and devoted to providing not just life, but quality of life for their children. Our tradition talks about the quality of life a parent must provide for a child, beyond the minimal necessities of survival. The Talmud insists that a father is obligated to his son in five ways. He must circumcise him and thus bring him into covenant with God. He must redeem him, if necessary, from temple service, teach him Torah, arrange for a marriage, teach him a trade, and, some add, teach him to swim.

Draw the lessons you will about fathers and mothers, sons and daughters in our own times. I am more interested in this text for its deeper lessons than for its specifics. Among those lessons is the common thread that runs through all the obligations—a child must be able to make his or her way through this world. As such, she must have not only skills but also guidance. He must be nurtured in the many environments in which he will live: spiritual, physical, social, and economic. She must be able to rely on her caregiver for more than basic care.

To be sure, there were times when the societal norm was for the father to be directly responsible for all of the obligations to his son. But as society diversified and grew, parents came to understand that they needed partners in meeting their obligations. A specialist called a mohel now acts on the father's behalf in circumcision. Students of all ages are taught Torah in schools, sustained and reinforced by their parents. Trade schools, colleges, and

universities provide the training for employment and career, and those who wish their children to learn to swim are rightfully more confident in certified instructors than in their own efforts. A parent is not freed from the responsibility to teach Torah by the presence of a system of formal Jewish education. A parent is not released from the obligation to guide a child into an appropriate marriage by the changing opportunities in our society. Most of us take those obligations seriously, and all of us struggle to afford what our children need to enhance their quality of life.

In our society, providing for the necessities of life requires the help of others. We are not necessarily busier or more scattered than in ancient times, but the rightful elevation of all human beings to equal status, as free and responsible citizens, has made support systems more difficult to maintain. Our father Jacob, applauded for his contribution of the scions of the tribes that made up our people, was a man of great substance. He and his wives had servants who saw to the needs of the household and the supervision of his 13 children. What could be more easily acquired in ancient times must be purchased today. For many families today, with either two loving parents or one, finding help to raise their children can be nearly impossible and even harder to afford. Child care easily costs $4,000 to $10,000 per year, as much as college tuition.

Nearly 5 million children between ages 5 and 14 are home alone each week after school. Perhaps yours is one of them. We no longer live in the garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve were expelled, they were required to work for their sustenance. What should be done when parents must work all day to provide for their families? Children left alone without proper guidance, love, and support may find that trouble is their companion long beyond their childhood. Embraced at night by weary but loving parents, the children of those who work outside the home can find themselves orphans by daylight. And our tradition has much to say about the treatment of orphans. Perhaps most telling is the midrash on Psalm 106, Verse 3: "Happy are those who preserve justice, who perform tzedakah every hour." How is it possible, asks Rabbi Samuel bar Nachmani, for a person to perform tzedakah every hour? He answers succinctly: by caring for an orphan.

Providing for children in the absence of their parents is not only a commendable activity; it is a hallmark of a just life and society. I could stand before you and argue that life today is too complex, that we should work to simplify how we live and what we need. You would agree, and we might leave determined in our wisdom and concerned in our hearts. However, our aspirations to reach for Eden need to be today's work rather than tomorrow's dreams.

In the meantime, the orphans of the daylight—the preschoolers of working parents, the elementary school students who come home to empty apartments and houses, and the young people who wander the malls and the streets during the summer months—need a place to go to be sheltered, grounded, and nurtured and to learn how to study or to get along with others. They need a place that affirms the love they know at home. They need after-school programs that will enliven their bodies, minds, and spirits, and their parents need better quality and more affordable child care now. We know that the hearts of mothers and fathers will rest easier while they strive to provide quality of life for their children if they have a dependable and affordable place to guard their most precious treasures as they work. Eden will become a reality as better quality and more affordable child care and after-school programs are provided now.

I do not have to defend for you the value we place on children in our tradition. For our own children and for others, we are charged with making this world a better place to live. We can be the guardians of justice and occupied at every moment with tzedakah if we will care for each others' children in our efforts to make Eden a reality by working to provide for better child care now.

An Erev Shabbat Service

Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children

Rabbi Marc Israel
Director of Congregational Relations
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
Washington, D.C.

The 1998 National Observance of Children's Sabbaths takes place this year on Parashat Breishit, or Genesis, the first Torah portion in the annual cycle. Portions of the following service pertain to the story of creation. If your congregation holds its Children's Shabbat at another time of the year, remember to substitute materials relevant to that week's Torah portion. Add music wherever you deem appropriate.

Opening

Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: The students of the wise increase peace in the world, as it says, "And all your children (banayich) will be taught of the Eternal and great shall be the peace of your children (banayich). Do not read banayich (your children) but bonayich (your builders)."

Berachot 64a

Our children may be the builders of the world but we are entrusted to be the builders of our children. We are not alone. There are friends and family; child care providers and coaches; teachers and mentors, all of whom join us in raising our children. Children reflect the lessons they learn from each of us.

Tonight we give thanks to all those who dedicate themselves to serving our children. They are the bonim (builders) of our banim (children). As we are grateful for the work they do, so too, we promise to work towards a day when all children shall have access to the provisions they need to grow and become healthy, happy children of God.

Candle Lighting

הדלקת נרות שבת

Hadlakat Neirot Shabbat

As the great doors of night are opening we come into the clean, quiet room of Shabbat.
Let us be thankful as we light these candles like eyes of holiness on this moment of peace.
Let us savor the fruit of the vine, the blood of the earth that quickens us.
Let us be thankful for grain, fruit of grasses that feed the cow, the gazelle, and us.
Let us be grateful for the children and the work of the week that are our own fruitfulness.
Let us as we eat never forget that food comes from the earth. We must cherish and heal through labor, we must respect and reward.

By Marge Piercy from *Kol Haneshamah, Shabbat Vehagim.* Reprinted with permission of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

Baruch atah Adonai Elohaynu melech ha'olam
asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu
lehadlik ner shel shabbat.

We praise You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe: You hallow us with Your Mitzvot, and command us to kindle the lights of Shabbat.

Lecha Dodi לכה דודי

Traditionally, during the last verse of "Lecha Dodi," the congregation turns around and faces the door to welcome the Shabbat spirit into the room. Tonight, as we join with congregations throughout the nation, celebrating the 1998 National Observance of Children's Sabbaths, let us also turn and symbolically welcome all of those who dedicate themselves to serving our nation's children.

לְכָה דודי לִקְרַאת כַּלָּה. פְּנֵי שַׁבָּת נְקַבְּלָה׃

L'cha do-di lik-rat ka-la, p'nei Shabbat n'ka-b'la
L'cha do-di lik-rat ka-la, p'nei Shabbat n'ka-b'la.

Beloved, come to meet the bride; beloved, come to greet Shabbat.
Beloved, come to meet the bride; beloved, come to greet Shabbat.

שָׁמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדִבּוּר אֶחָד, הִשְׁמִיעָנוּ אֵל הַמְיֻחָד.
יְיָ אֶחָד וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד. לְשֵׁם וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת וְלִתְהִלָּה׃ לכה

Sha-mor v'za-chor b'dibur eh-chad, hish mi-anu
Eil ha-m'yuchad;
Adonai eh-chad, u'sh-mo eh-chad, l'sheim u-l'tif-eh'ret
v'li-t'hi-la.
L'cha do-di . . .

Keep and Remember: a single command, the Only God caused us to hear; the Eternal is One, God's name is One, for honor and glory and praise.
Beloved . . .

לִקְרַאת שַׁבָּת לְכוּ וְנֵלְכָה. כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה.
מֵרֹאשׁ מִקֶּדֶם נְסוּכָה. סוֹף מַעֲשֶׂה בְּמַחֲשָׁבָה תְּחִלָּה׃ לכה

Lik-rat Shabbat l'chu v'nei-l'cha, ki hi m'kor ha'b'ra-cha.
Mei-rosh mi-keh-dem n'su-cha, sof ma-a-seh b'ma-cha-sha-va t'chi-la.
L'cha do-di . . .

Come with me to meet Shabbat, forever a fountain of blessing. Still it flows, as from the start: the last of days, for which the first was made.
Beloved . . .

הִתְעוֹרְרִי הִתְעוֹרְרִי. כִּי בָא אוֹרֵךְ קוּמִי אוֹרִי.
עוּרִי עוּרִי שִׁיר דַּבֵּרִי. כְּבוֹד יְיָ עָלַיִךְ נִגְלָה׃ לכה

Hit-o-r'ri, hit-o-r'ri, ki va o-reich! Ku-mi o-ri,
u-ri u-ri, shir da-bei-ri; k'vod Adonai a-la-yich nig-la.
L'cha do-di . . .

Awake, awake, your light has come! Arise, shine, awake, and sing, the eternal's glory dawns upon you.
Beloved . . .

בּוֹאִי בְשָׁלוֹם עֲטֶרֶת בַּעְלָהּ. גַּם בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְצָהֳלָה.
תּוֹךְ אֱמוּנֵי עַם סְגֻלָּה. בּוֹאִי כַלָּה, בּוֹאִי כַלָּה׃ לכה

Bo-i v'sha-lom, a teh-ret ba-a-lah; gam b'sim-chah
u-v'tsa-ho-la.
Toch eh-mu-nei am s'gu-la, bo-i cha-la! Bo-i cha-la!
L'cha do-di . . .

Enter in peace, O crown of your husband; enter in gladness, enter in joy. Come to the people that keeps its faith. Enter, O bride! Enter, O bride!
Beloved . . .

Chatzi Kaddish חצי קדיש

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כִרְעוּתֵהּ, וְיַמְלִיךְ
מַלְכוּתֵהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. בַּעֲגָלָא
וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן׃

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא׃

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאַר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדַּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה
וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא לְעֵלָּא (בעשי"ת וּלְעֵלָּא מִכָּל)
מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא, תֻּשְׁבְּחָתָא וְנֶחֱמָתָא, דַּאֲמִירָן בְּעָלְמָא,
וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן׃

Yit-ga-dal v'yit-ka-dash sh-mei ra-ba b'al-ma di-v'ra chi-r'u'tei, v'yam-lich mal-chu-tei b'cha-yei-chon u'v-yo-mei-chon u'v'cha-yei d'chol beit Yis-ra-eil, ba-a-ga-la u-vi-z'man ka-riv, v'i-m'ru: A-mein.

Y'hei sh'mei ra-ba m'va-rach l'a-lam u-l'al-mei al-ma-ya.

Yit-ba-rach v'yish-ta-bach v'yit-pa-ar, v'yit-ro-mam, v'yit-na-sei, v'yit-ha-dar, v'hit-a-leh, v'yit-ha-lal sh'mei d'kud-sha, b'rich hu, l'ei-la min kol bir-cha-ta v'shi-ra'ta, tush-b'cha-ta v'neh-cheh-ma-ta da-a-mi-ran b'al-ma, v'i-m ru: A-mein.

Let the glory of God be extolled, and God's great name be hallowed in the world whose creation God willed. May God rule in our own day, in our own lives, and in the life of all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

Let God's great name be blessed for ever and ever.

Beyond all the praises, songs, and adorations that we can utter is the Holy One, the Blessed One, who yet we glorify, honor and exalt. And let us say: Amen.

Barechu

בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ׃

Barechu et Adonai hamvorach.

Praise the Eternal, to whom all praise is due.

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד׃

Baruch Adonai hamvorach le'olam va'ed.

Praise the Eternal, to whom all praise is due now and forever.

Maariv Aravim מעריב ערבים

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ , אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בִּדְבָרוֹ מַעֲרִיב עֲרָבִים, בְּחָכְמָה פּוֹתֵחַ שְׁעָרִים, וּבִתְבוּנָה מְשַׁנֶּה עִתִּים, וּמַחֲלִיף אֶת הַזְּמַנִּים, וּמְסַדֵּר אֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים, בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹתֵיהֶם בָּרָקִיעַ כִּרְצוֹנוֹ. בּוֹרֵא יוֹם וָלָיְלָה, גּוֹלֵל אוֹר מִפְּנֵי חֹשֶׁךְ, וְחֹשֶׁךְ מִפְּנֵי אוֹר. וּמַעֲבִיר יוֹם וּמֵבִיא לָיְלָה, וּמַבְדִּיל בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לָיְלָה, יְיָ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ. אֵל חַי וְקַיָּם, תָּמִיד יִמְלוֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמַּעֲרִיב עֲרָבִים׃

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha-olam asher bi-d'varo ma-ariv aravim, b'chochma potey-ach sh'arim u-vitvuna m'shaneh itim, u-macha-lif et ha-z'manim u-m'sadeyr et ha-kochavim b'mish-m'ro-teyhem ba-rakia kir-tzono.Borey yom va-laila, goleyl or mipney cho-shech v'cho-shech mipney or.
U-ma-avir yom u-meyvi laila, u'mavdil beyn yom u-veyn laila, Adonai tz'vaot sh'mo.
Eyl chai v'kayam tamid yimloch aleynu l'olam va-ed.
Baruch ata Adonai, ha-ma-ariv aravim.

Blessed are You, Eternal One our God, Sovereign of all worlds,
by whose word the evenings fall.
In wisdom You open heaven's gates.
With divine discernment You make seasons change,
causing the times to come and go, and ordering the stars on their appointed paths
through heaven's dome, all according to Your will.
Creator of the day and night, Who rolls back light before the dark, and dark before the light, Who makes day pass away and brings on night, dividing between day and night:
The Leader of the Throngs of Heaven is Your name!
Living and enduring God, rule over us, now and always.
Blessed are You, Almighty One, who makes the evenings fall.

Reflection

God of the generations, God of new beginnings, children are Your promise of tomorrow made in Your image, a reflection of Your divine love. Teach us to raise our children worthy of this sacred trust of life. Sustain us and our children in health and love. We are thankful for the beauty of our lives and the ability to bring new life. We are thankful to all those who help us to raise our children in love.

Adapted from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association *Rabbi's Manual*. Used with permission.

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Ahavat Olam אהבת עולם

אַהֲבַת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ אָהָבְתָּ, תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים, אוֹתָנוּ לִמַּדְתָּ עַל כֵּן יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּשָׁכְבֵנוּ וּבְקוּמֵנוּ נָשִׂיחַ בְּחֻקֶּיךָ, וְנִשְׂמַח בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָתֶךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ וְאֹרֶךְ יָמֵינוּ, וּבָהֶם נֶהְגֶּה יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה, וְאַהֲבָתְךָ אַל תָּסִיר מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Ahavat olam beyt yisra'el amecha ahavta.
Torah u'mitzvot chukim u'mishpatim otanu limad'ta.
Al ken Adonai Eloheynu besochbenu
u'v'kumenu nasiach be'chukecha
v'nishmach b'divrey toratecha
u'v'mitzvotecha le'olam va'ed ki hem chayeynu v'orech
yameynu u'vahem nehgeh yomam valaylah.
V'ahavatecha al tasir mimenu l'olamim.
Baruch ata Adonai ohev amo Yisra'el.

Your everlasting love for the house of Israel,
Torah and mitzvot, laws and justice You have taught us.
And so, Dear One our God, when we lie down and
when we rise up, we reflect upon Your laws.
We take pleasure in Your Torah's words and Your
mitzvot, now and always.
Truly, they are our life, our length of days.
On them we meditate by day and night.
Your love will never depart from us as long as
worlds endure.
Blessed are You, Beloved One, who loves Your people
Israel.

Responsive Reading

Leader: When Israel was about to receive Torah, the Holy One said to them, "I am about to give you my Torah. Bring me worthy guarantors to ensure that you will uphold it, and I will give it to you."

Congregation: They said, "Let our ancestors be our guarantors."

Leader: The Holy One replied, "I find many faults in your ancestors. Bring me better guarantors, and I will give it to you."

Congregation: They said, "Ruler of the Universe! Our prophets will be our guarantors."

Leader: Said the Holy One, "With your prophets I also find many faults. Bring me better guarantors, and I will give you My Torah."

Congregation: They said, "Our children will be our guarantors."

Leader: The Holy One replied, "Truly they are good guarantors. For their sake I will give you the Torah."

Congregation: Therefore, parents are required to introduce their child to the study of Torah and to provide good grounding in the ways of the House of Israel in order that the child may live long and well in the world.

Shir HaShirim Rabbah, Midrashic Commentary on Song of Songs

Sh'ma

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד:

Sh'ma Yis-ra-eil, Adonai Eh-lo-hei-nu, Adonai Eh-chad!
Hear, O Israel, the Eternal One is our God, the Eternal
God alone!

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Ba-ruch shem k'vod mal-chu-to l'o-lam va-ed!
Blessed is God's glorious majesty for ever and ever!

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ, וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ, וּבְכָל-מְאֹדֶךָ. וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם, עַל-לְבָבֶךָ: וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ, וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ, וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ, וּבְקוּמֶךָ. וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדֶךָ, וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ, וְכָתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתֶךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ:

לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתָי, וִהְיִיתֶם קְדֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, לִהְיוֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים, אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

V'ahavta et Adonai Ehlohehcha b'chol l'vav'cha
u'v'chol nafsh'cha u'v'chol m'odehcha.

V'hayu ha-d'varim ha-eileh asher anochi
m'tzav'cha ha-yom al l'vavehcha.

V'shinantam l'vanehcha v'dibarta bam
b'shivt'cha b'veitehcha u'v'lecht'cha
vadehrech u'v'shochb'cha u'v'kumehcha.

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U'kshartam l'ot al yadehcha v'hayu l'totafot bein einehcha, u'ch'tavtam al m'zuzot beitehcha u'vish'arehcha.

L'ma-an tizk'ru va-asitem et kol mitzvotai, vi-h'yitem k'doshim leiloheichem. Ani Adonai Ehloheichem asher hotzeiti etchem m'eretz mitzrayim lih'yot lachem leilohim. Ani Adonai Ehloheichem.

You shall love your Eternal God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your being. Set these words, which I command you this day, upon your heart.

Teach them faithfully to your children.

Speak of them in your home and on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up.

Bind them as a sign upon your hand.

Let them be symbols before your eyes.
Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates.

Be mindful of all My mitzvot, and do them, so shall you consecrate yourselves to your God.
I am your Eternal God who led you out of Egypt to be your God.
I am your Eternal God.

Reflection on the Sh'ma God Is with Us

The day has gone, and darkness has fallen. The stars crowd the sky. How great a universe—how little we understand it! And greater still the God who made it. How small we seem to ourselves when we think of the great stars and the greater God. Yet we are small only in size. Our minds can make us very great, when we think of God and try to become like God.

God is with us and in us, helping our minds to grow.

We cannot see God, but we can feel God with our hearts.

God is in our thoughts, and in all the good we do.

God is in gentle and peaceful people.
God is in all who add to the happiness of the world.

All who teach, all who learn.
All who speak truth, all who listen with honest minds.

All who study Torah, all who teach it.
These show us the God we cannot see.

From *Gates of Prayer*
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G'ulah Redemption

Leader: Those who raise children in their home are considered by scripture as the ones who gave birth to them.

Congregation: In loving and protecting them, those who raise them, bless them with the shelter of their deeds and their name. Call their name beloved, for they are our inheritors.

Leader: The ones who teach children Torah are considered as the ones who gave birth to them.

Congregation: Call their name beloved, for they are our inheritors. By them we have been blessed and upon their lives we have laid our blessing.

From the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association *Rabbi's Manual.*
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Mi Chamocha

מִי כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם יְיָ,
מִי כָמֹכָה נֶאְדָּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ,
נוֹרָא תְהִלֹּת,עֹשֵׂה פֶלֶא׃

מַלְכוּתְךָ רָאוּ בָנֶיךָ,בּוֹקֵעַ יָם לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה, זֶה אֵלִי עָנוּ וְאָמְרוּ׃
יְיָ יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

וְנֶאֱמַר׃ כִּי פָדָה יְיָ אֶת יַעֲקֹב, וּגְאָלוֹ מִיַּד חָזָק מִמֶּנּוּ.בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, גָּאַל יִשְׂרָאֵל׃

Mi chamocha ba'elim Adonai? Mi kamocha
nedar bakodesh
nora tehilot osey feleh?
malchut'cha ra'u vanecha, boke'a yam lifnei
Moshe zeh Eli anu v'amru:
Adonai yimloch l'olam va'ed.

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V'ne-emar ki fadah Adonai et Ya'akov u'galo miyad chazak mimenu.
Baruch atah Adonai ga'al Yisra'el.

Who is like You, Eternal One, among the gods that are worshipped?
Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders?
In their escape from the sea, Your children saw Your sovereign might displayed.
"This is my God!" they cried. "The Eternal will reign for ever and ever!"
Now let all come to say:
The Eternal has redeemed Israel and all the oppressed.
Blessed is the Eternal God.

Hashkivenu Help Us

השכיבנו

הַשְׁכִּיבֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם,וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ לְחַיִּים וּפְרוֹשׂ עָלֵינוּ סֻכַּת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ, וְתַקְּנֵנוּ בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ, וְהָגֵן בַּעֲדֵנוּ, וְהָסֵר מֵעָלֵינוּ אוֹיֵב, דֶּבֶר, וְחֶרֶב, וְרָעָב וְיָגוֹן, וְהָסֵר שָׂטָן מִלְּפָנֵינוּ וּמֵאַחֲרֵנוּ, וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ תַּסְתִּירֵנוּ. כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרֵנוּ וּמַצִּילֵנוּ אָתָּה, כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אָתָּה, וּשְׁמוֹר צֵאתֵנוּ וּבוֹאֵנוּ, לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. וּפְרֹשׂ עָלֵינוּ סֻכַּת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַפּוֹרֵשׂ סֻכַּת שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלָיִם.

Hash-kiveynu Adonai Eloheynu l'shalom,
v'ha-amideynu malkeynu l'chayyim.
Ufros aleynu sukat sh'lomecha, v'tak-neynu
b'eytzah tovah mil-fanecha
v'hoshi-eynu l'ma-an sh'mecha.
V'hageyn ba-adeynu, v'ha-seyr mey-aleynu oyeyv,
dever, v'cherev, v'ra-av, v'yagon, v'ha-seyr satan
mil-fa-neynu umey-ach-reynu,
uv-tzeyl k'nafecha tas-tireynu ki Eyl shom-reynu
u'matzileynu ata, ki
Eyl melech chanun v'rachum atah.
U'sh-mor tzey-teynu uvo-eynu l'chayyim
ul'shalom mey-ata v'ad olam.
Uf-ros aleynu sukat sh'lomecha.
Baruch ata Adonai, ha-poreys sukat shalom
aleynu v'al kol amo
Yisrael v'al Y'ru-shala-yim.

Help us to lie down, Dear One, our God, in peace, and let us rise again,
our Sovereign, to life.
Spread over us the shelter of Your peace.
Decree for us a worthy daily lot, and redeem us for the sake of Your great name, and enfold us in the wings of Your protection, for You are our redeeming guardian.
Truly, a sovereign, gracious, and compassionate God are You.
Guard our going forth each day for life and peace, now and always.
Spread over us the shelter of Your peace.
Blessed are You, Compassionate One,
who spreads Your canopy of peace
over all Your people Israel and over Jerusalem.

Reflection

Anyone who teaches a child Torah does not teach that child only, but also the child's descendants and the descendants of the descendants and so on to the end of all generations.

Kiddushin 30a

V'shamru

ושמרו

וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם: בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם, כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְיָ אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ, וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפַשׁ.

V'shameru v'ney Yisrael et ha-shabbat, la-asot et ha-shabbat l'dorotam b'rit olam.
Beyni uveyn b'ney yisrael ot hi l'olam ki shey-shet yamim asa Adonai et ha-shamayim v'et ha-aretz u'va-yom ha-sh'vi-i shavat va-yina-fash.

Let Israel's descendants keep Shabbat, making Shabbat throughout all their generation, as an eternal bond. Between Me and Israel's descendants shall it be a sign eternally.
For in six days the Fashioner of All made skies and earth, and on the seventh day God ceased and drew a breath of rest.

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Amidah Standing in Prayer — עמידה

Avot Ve'Imot The Ancestors — אבות ואמהות

אֲדֹנָי שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתֶךָ׃

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ,
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה,
אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה,
וֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, אֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה,
וֵאלֹהֵי רָחֵל,

הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֶלְיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר חַסְדֵי אָבוֹת וְאִמָּהוֹת, וּמֵבִיא גּוֹאֵל לִבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה׃ מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמָגֵן׃
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מָגֵן אַבְרָהָם וְעֶזְרַת שָׂרָה׃

Adonai, s'fatai tif-tach, u'fi yaggid t'hilatecha.

Baruch atah Adonai, Elohaynu vaylohei
avoteinu v'imoteinu
Elohay Avraham Elohay Sarah
Elohay Yitzchak Elohay Rivka
Elohay Yaakov Elohay Rachel
Vey-lohay Leah

Ha-eil ha-ga-dol ha-gibor v'ha-nora,
Eil elyon gomeil chasadim tovim,
v'konei ha-kol, v'zo-cheir chas'dei avot ve'imot,
v'mei-vi g'u-la li'v'nei v'nei-hem, l'ma-an sh'mo, b'ahava.
Melech o-zeir u'mo-shi-a u'ma-gein.
Baruch ata Adonai, ma-gein Avraham v'ezrat Sarah.

Open my mouth, Beloved One, and let my
mouth declare Your praise.

Blessed are You, the Ancient One,
our God, God of our ancestors;
God of Abraham,
God of Isaac,
God of Jacob,
God of Sarah,
God of Rebekah,
God of Rachel, and
God of Leah;

Great, heroic, awesome God, supreme Divinity,
imparting deeds of lovingkindness, Begetter of
all; Mindful of the loyalty of Israel's ancestors,
Bringing, with love, redemption to their
children's children, for the sake of the Divine Name.
Regal One, our help, salvation and protector;
Blessed are You, Kind One,
the shield of Abraham and help of Sarah.

Gevurot — גבורות

אַתָּה גִּבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי, מְחַיֵּה מֵתִים אַתָּה, רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ׃
מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד, מְחַיֵּה מֵתִים בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים, סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים, וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים, וּמְקַיֵּם אֱמוּנָתוֹ לִישֵׁנֵי עָפָר, מִי כָמוֹךָ בַּעַל גְּבוּרוֹת וּמִי דּוֹמֶה לָךְ, מֶלֶךְ מֵמִית וּמְחַיֶּה וּמַצְמִיחַ יְשׁוּעָה׃ וְנֶאֱמָן אַתָּה לְהַחֲיוֹת מֵתִים. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מְחַיֵּה הַמֵּתִים׃

A-ta gi-bor l'o'lam, Adonai, m'cha-yei ha-kol a-ta, rav l'ho-shi-a. M'chal-keil cha-yim b'cheh-sed, m'cha-yei ha-kol b'ra-cha-mim ra-bim. So-meich no-f'lim v'ro-fei cho-lim, u-ma tir a-su-rim, u-m'ka-yeim eh-mu-na-to li-shei-nei a-far. Mi cha-mo-cha ba-al g'vu-rot, u-mi do-meh lach, meh-lech mei-mit u-m'cha-yeh u-matz-mi-ach y'shu-a?

V'neh-eh-man a-ta l'ha-cha-yot ha-kol. Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, m'cha-yei ha-kol.

Eternal is Your might, O God; all life is Your gift; great is Your power to save!
With love You sustain the living, with great compassion give life to all.
You send help to the falling and healing to the sick.
You bring freedom to the captive and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.
Who is like You, Mighty One, Author of life and death, Source of salvation?
We praise You, O God, the Source of life.

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Kedushah קדושה

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קָדוֹשׁ וּקְדוֹשִׁים בְּכָל יוֹם יְהַלְלוּךָ, סֶלָה. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ.

A-ta ka-dosh v'shim-chah ka-dosh u-k'do-shim b'chol yom y'halle-lu-chah, selah. Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai ha-el ha-ka-dosh.

You are holy, Your name is holy, and those who strive to be holy declare Your glory day by day.

In Praise of Hands

Blessed be the worked of Your hands, O Holy One.
Blessed be these hands that have touched life.
Blessed be these hands that have nurtured creativity.
Blessed be these hands that have held pain.
Blessed be these hands that have embraced with passion.
Blessed be these hands that have tended gardens.
Blessed be these hands that have closed in anger.
Blessed be these hands that have planted new seeds.
Blessed be these hands that have harvested ripe fields.
Blessed be these hands that have cleaned, washed, mopped, scrubbed.
Blessed be these hands that have become knotty with age.
Blessed be these hands that are wrinkled and scarred from doing justice.
Blessed be these hands that have reached out and been received.
Blessed be these hands that hold the promise of the future.
Blessed be the works of Your hands, O Holy One.

By Diann L. Neu from *WATERwheel*, 1989, Vol. 2, No.1. Used with permission.

Blessing To Love and to Care

We thank You, O God, for our family and for what we mean and bring to one another. We are grateful for the bonds of loyalty and affection that sustain us and that keep us close to one another no matter how far apart we may be.

We thank You for implanting within us a deep need for each other and for giving us the capacity to love and to care.

Help us to be modest in our demands of one another, but generous in our giving to each other. May we never measure how much love or encouragement we offer; may we never count the times we forgive. Rather, may we always be grateful that we have one another and that we are able to express our love in acts of kindness.

Keep us gentle in our speech. When we offer words of criticism, may they be chosen with care and spoken softly. May we waste no opportunity to speak words of sympathy, of appreciation, of praise.

Bless our family with health, happiness, and contentment. Above all, grant us the wisdom to build a joyous and peaceful home in which Your spirit will always abide.

Likrat Shabbat, 7

Shalom Rav A Blessing of Peace שלום רב

שָׁלוֹם רָב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ תָּשִׂים לְעוֹלָם, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ אָדוֹן לְכָל הַשָּׁלוֹם. וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה בִּשְׁלוֹמֶךָ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּשָּׁלוֹם.

Shalom rav al yisra'el am'cha tasim l'olam.
Ki atah hu melech adon l'chol ha-shalom.
V'tov b'eynecha l'varech et am'cha Yisrael
b'chol eyt u'v'chol sha-ah bishlomecha.
Baruch atah Adonai ha-m'varech et amo Yisrael
ba-shalom.

Grant abundant peace eternally for Israel, Your people.
For You are the sovereign source of all peace.
So, may it be a good thing in Your eyes to bless
Your people Israel, and all who dwell on earth, in every time and hour, with Your peace.

Blessed are You, Compassionate One, who
blesses Your people Israel with peace.

Shabbat Bereshit A Reflection on Creation

When God created the world, God made everything a little bit incomplete. Instead of making bread grow out of the earth, God made wheat grow so that we might bake it into bread. Instead of making the earth of bricks, God made it of clay so that we might bake the clay into bricks. Why? So that we could become God's partner in the task of completing the work of creation.

Likrat Shabbat, 127

Aleinu עלינו

עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבֵּחַ לַאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל, לָתֵת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית, שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂנוּ כְּגוֹיֵי הָאֲרָצוֹת, וְלֹא שָׂמָנוּ כְּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה, שֶׁלֹּא שָׂם חֶלְקֵנוּ כָּהֶם, וְגֹרָלֵנוּ כְּכָל הֲמוֹנָם.

וַאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים, לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ, מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא.

Aleinu l'sha-beyach la-adon ha-kol
La-teyt g'dula l'yotzer b'reyshit.
Shelo asanu k'go-yey ha-aratzot,
V'lo samanu k'mish-p'chot ha-adama.
Shelo sam chel-keynu ka-hem,
V'gora-leynu k'chol hamonam.
Va'anachnu kor-im u'mishtachavim u'modim
Lifnei melech malchey ha-m'lachim
Ha-kadosh baruch hu.

Let us now praise the Source of all,
Let us acclaim the Author of creation,
Who made us unlike the pagans who
surrounded us, unlike the heathens of the ancient world.
Who made our heritage different from theirs,
and assigned to us a unique destiny.
We bend the knee and reverently bow
before the Ruler of rulers, the Holy Blessed One.

Reflection Before the Kaddish

Leader: In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember them.

Congregation: In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.

Leader: In the opening buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

Congregation: In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.

Leader: In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.

Congregation: In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.

Leader: When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.

Congregation: When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.

Leader: When we have joys we yearn to share, we remember them.

Congregation: So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.

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Mourner's Kaddish קריש יתום

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כִרְעוּתֵהּ, וְיַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאַר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדַּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא לְעֵלָּא (בעשי"ת ולְעֵלָּא מִכָּל) מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא, תֻּשְׁבְּחָתָא וְנֶחֱמָתָא, דַּאֲמִירָן בְּעָלְמָא, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Yitgadal v'yitkadash shemey raba b'alma divra chirutey v'yamlich malchutey, b'chayeychon u'v'yomey-chon u'v'chayey d'chol beyt yisrael ba'agala u'vizman kariv v'imru, amen.

Yehey shemey raba m'varach l'alam ul'almey almaya.

Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam v'yitnasey v'yit-hadar v'yitaleh v'yit-halal sh'mey d'kudsha b'rich hu l'ela min kol birchata v'shirata tushb'chata v'nechemata da'amiran b'alma v'imru amen.

Yehey sh'lama raba min shemaya v'chayim aleynu v'al kol yisrael ve'imru amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya'aseh shalom aleynu ve'al kol yisra'el ve'al kol yoshvey tevel v'imru amen.

Let God's name be made great and holy in the world that was created as God willed.
May God complete the holy realm in your own lifetime, in your days,
and in the days of all the house of Israel, quickly and soon.
And let us say: Amen.

May God's great name be blessed, forever and as long as worlds endure.
May it be blessed, and praised, and glorified,
and held in honor, viewed with awe, embellished,
and revered; and may the Blessed Name of holiness be hailed,
though it be higher than all the blessings, songs,
praises, and consolations that we utter in this world.
And let us say: Amen.

May Heaven grant a universal peace,
and life for us, and for all Israel.
And let us say: Amen.

May the One who creates harmony above,
make peace for us and for all Israel, and
for all who dwell on earth.
And let us say: Amen.

Blessing of the Children ברכת הילדים

We call upon the child care providers in the congregation and their children to come to the bima and lead us as together we bless our children.

Blessed is the parent, and blessed the child, when their hearts are turned to one another. Blessed is the home filled with gladness and light, the spirit of Shabbat. May God bless you and guide you. Seek truth always, be charitable in your words, just and loving in your deeds. A noble heritage has been entrusted to you; guard it well.

For a Boy

יְשִׂמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה

Y sim'cha Elohim k'ephrayim u' menasheh

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Ephraim and Menasheh, who carried forward the life of our people.

For a Girl

יִשְׂמֵךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה רִבְקָה לֵאָה וְרָחֵל

Yismech Elohim k'Sarah, Rivkah, Leah, v'Rachel

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Sarah, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel, who carried forward the life of our people.

For Both Boys and Girls

יְבָרֶכְךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ
יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ
יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם

Y'varech'cha Adonai veyishm'rehcha
Yair Adonai panav eleycha vichuneka
Yisa Adonai panav eleycha veyasem lecha shalom

May God bless you and keep you. May God look kindly upon you and be gracious to you. May God reach out to you in tenderness and give you peace.

Excerpted from *On the Doorposts of Your House*, © 1994, Central Conference of American Rabbis. Used with permission of the publisher

Interfaith

During the past seven years more and more local communities throughout the country have been hosting interfaith gatherings through the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths. Many local congregations have joined with their neighboring communities of faith bringing together, Muslims and Hindus, Baha'is and Christians, Sikhs and Jews, Buddhists and Unitarian Universalists, to mention a few. They have gathered in prayer, planning and participating in interfaith services, as well as joining already existent coalitions or forming new ones to work on behalf of children's concerns.

This section includes one model for an interfaith service to be used or adapted in your community. This particular model draws on the Abrahamic scriptures from the Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions, as well as providing a "Litany of Light," which holds in remembrance leaders from various faith traditions.

Contacts for Local Models

For guidance as you consider hosting an interfaith event, you may wish to contact the following religious organizations that have sponsored Children's Sabbath interfaith events in their communities.

Children's Sabbath Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
Telephone: 215-563-5848

Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee
Telephone: 414-276-9050

Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston
Telephone: 713-520-4654

The Children's Sabbath Advisory Council, Jacksonville, Fla.
Telephone: 904-353-4367

The Children's Sabbath Taskforce, Kalamazoo, Mich.
Telephone: 616-344-9874

An Interfaith Service

Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children

Shannon Daley-Harris
Director, Religious Affairs Division
Children's Defense Fund
Washington, D.C.

Prelude

Processional (with instrumental music or percussion instruments only)

Welcome

Call to Worship

Leader 1: We are a people gifted and called to raise up our children from despair to hope.

People: We gather this day, grateful for the giftedness given to us to share with our children. We have a vision of the day when every child receives the love and care they need.

Leader 2: We are a people gifted and called to raise up our children from ignorance to achievement.

People: We gather this day, grateful for the calling we have received to bind up wounds and heal the brokenhearted. We have a vision of the day when every child realizes their potential to build up our world in love and peace.

Leader 3: We are a people gifted and called to raise up our children from fear to living a life of confidence in God's goodness.

People: We gather this day, grateful for the opportunity to protect and nurture children entrusted to us by God. We have a vision of the day when all children will walk hand in hand and show us a world filled with peace and justice.

First Reading Exodus 1:8-14

Prayer [Unison]

Liberating God, we confess that ours is a world in which families are still oppressed, laboring long hours and yet unable to support their families. Others lack the skills, education, or opportunity to work. As long as we are able to provide for our own families, we admit that our energy often flags in ensuring the same for others. We confess that ours is a world where fear of the disadvantaged often rules our hearts and our actions. Our nation often looks to punishment rather than opportunity as the solution.

We know, O God, that we are in need of Your guiding hand at this time. Stir us from our complacency, we pray, and infuse us with Your spirit that we may work tirelessly to see that labor is rewarded and families are provided for. Unbind us from the fears that chain our hearts; help us to understand that opportunity and freedom, not condemnation and punishment, are Your will for children.

Guide us, we pray, in making our world safe for children. Help us to change the policies and the hearts of the policy makers that put children at risk. Renew our power and commitment that comes from You. This we ask in confidence of Your forgiveness and compassion, Your justice and Your love. Amen.

Congregational Hymn "The God of Abraham Praise"

Second Reading Exodus 1:15-17

Litany of Light

People: We pray in gratitude as we remember some of those who so readily shared their giftedness in service to our world and its children.

Leader 1: We light candles at this time in thanksgiving for all of God's faithful servants who have loved and served God—known by many names—through the ages. We give thanks for those who have listened to their hearts and listened to God instead of the dictates of earthly powers.

Leader 2: We light this candle in thanksgiving for the life of Martin Luther King Jr. and for all who have caught God's dream of life lived fully by every child and share God's love for each one of God's children.

Leader 3: We light this candle in thanksgiving for the life of Mahatma Gandhi and for all who share his commitment to peaceful but powerful change in the face of brutal oppression and domination.

Leader 4: We light this candle in thanksgiving for the life of Mother Teresa and for all who share her tender love and extend her healing touch to those who are the poorest, sickest, youngest, or most vulnerable whom society ignores or despises.

Leader 5: We light this candle in thanksgiving for the life of Anwar al-Sadat and for the ongoing work of Jehan Sadat and for all who together dare to dream and work for peace when angry voices call for war and who work for the wholeness and well-being of children.

Leader 6: We light this candle in thanksgiving for the life of Abraham Joshua Heschel and all of those who "pray with their feet," who faithfully stand and march and work and pray in solidarity with those who seek freedom and dignity.

Leader 7: We light this candle, remembering those whose lives and work and faith have inspired us in our own efforts to nurture and protect children. Hear us now as we speak their names in the presence of one another. [Invite the congregation to lift up names.]

Leader 8: We light this candle in thanksgiving for the lives of all of those who are gathered here, and for our colleagues and friends not present, for their vision and persistence, for these hearts of compassion and voices for justice.

People: "As these candles give light to all who behold them, so may we, by our lives, give light to all who behold us. As their brightness reminds us of the generations before us who have kindled light, so may we, in our own day, be among those who kindle light."

Final people's response adapted from *Gates of Prayer*, p. 142. Used with permission.

Congregational Hymn "This Little Light of Mine"

Antiphonal Third Reading Exodus 2:1-4

[Appoint a leader for the right side and one for the left side of the congregation.]

Right Side: Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

Left Side: The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him.

Right Side: Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it.

Left Side: When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

Unison: O God, we give You thanks that in every time and place You have provided people to nurture and care for children. We give thanks for parents who love and protect their children. We give You thanks for people of compassion who reach out and respond to children in need, especially foster and adoptive parents. And we give You thanks for all of those who care for children: for child care providers, for health care professionals, for Head Start teachers, for social workers, for teachers, for mentors, and so many others. In Your name, we give thanks for Your call to raise up our children. Amen.

Anthem

Fourth Reading Exodus 2:11-4:17

Moment of Reflection and Silence or Brief Spoken Reflection/Sermon

Renewal of Commitment

Leader: Sisters and brothers, there are still families who are imprisoned by poverty, violence, and cruel policies. Who will work to raise up all families?

People: We will work to raise up all families.

Leader: There are still children imperiled by forces beyond their control, set adrift in the swirling waters of political wrangling, who need a safe harbor. Who will work to make all children safe?

People: We will work to make all children safe.

Leader: There are still alliances of care and concern to be forged on behalf of our children: among parents, compassionate adults, child care providers, health care providers, people in positions of influence and political power—people of different races, religions, ethnicities, political affiliations. Who will help to forge these alliances for the sake of our children?

People: We will help to forge these alliances for the sake of our children.

Leader: God said, "I will be with you."

People: And we will proclaim: "Raise up our children!"

Congregational Hymn "I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me"

Benediction

Recessional Anthem

Postlude

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Prayers and Poems from Many Faiths and Cultures

The following prayers and poems can be used in a variety of ways; as part of your own faith tradition's worship service, in an ecumenical setting, or as part of an interfaith celebration. The texts can also be used to enhance educational materials as well as to lend inspiration to community service and advocacy initiatives.

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels and the Scripture and the Messengers; to spend of your wealth, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, and for those who ask, and for freeing slaves; to observe prayer and give charity; to fulfill the contracts that you have made, to be firm and be patient in pain and in adversity, and in time of stress: such are those who are sincere. Such are the God-conscious.

From the Qur'an, Surah 2:177

Hail the day on which this child is born.
O joy! Let us all sing and praise her—
that she gave birth to a son
for whom she longed.
Greet this day with joy.
Our hearts are glad.

A Masai prayer from Tanzania

Oh child! This is your mother's blessing. May you never forget God even for a moment and always remember the Lord of the universe. By meditating on God all the sins are obliterated and generations are enlightened. Ponder over always on that Lord who is boundless. May the true Guru (holy preceptor/divine teacher) be kind to you and may you nurture love for the company of saints (holy person).

May the preservation of your honor by the Lord be your attire: Singing of His praise your daily bread. Drink ever the nectar of God's name and live long. By remembering God may you attain bliss. May joys and playful pleasures be yours. May your hopes be realized and may you never get distressed. Let your mind hover like a humming black bee at the lotus feet of God. Says the humble Nanak [the founder of Sikhism] be attached to God like a pied-cuckoo that rejoices in ecstasy on finding rain drop.

This above hymn is inscribed in Sikh Scripture, and was composed by the fifth Guru (holy preceptor) Arjun Dev as a blessing to children.

The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart.

A Saying from Confucianism in Mencius IV.B.12

O Lord, let my spirit glow so brightly, that darkness will disappear.

A Muslim child's prayer from Pakistan

Each child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), Bengali poet

O my Lord! O my Lord!
I am a child of tender years.
Nourish me from the breast of Thy mercy,
train me in the bosom of Thy love,
educate me in the School of Thy guidance
and develop me under the shadow of Thy bounty.
Deliver me from darkness,
make me a brilliant light;
free me from unhappiness,
make me a flower of the rose garden;
suffer me to become a servant of Thy threshold
and confer upon me the disposition and nature of the righteous;
make me a cause of bounty to the human world,
and crown my head with the diadem of eternal life.
Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Seer, the Hearer.

From *Baha'i Prayers: A Selection of Prayers Revealed by Baha'u'llah, the Bab, and Abdu'l-Baha.*
Used with permission of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States © 1982, 1985.

O [Muumbi] Creator, You who have created all human beings,
You have conferred a great benefit on us by bringing us this child.

A prayer from Kamba, Kenya

Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter?
And He found thee wandering, and He gave thee guidance.
And He found thee in need, and made thee independent.
Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness,
nor repulse him who asks: but the bounty of thy Lord—rehearse and proclaim!

Qur'an, Surah 93:6-11

If you give someone a fish, they will have a meal.
If you teach that person to fish, they will have a living.
If you are thinking a year ahead, sow seed.
If you are thinking ten years ahead, plant a tree.
If you are thinking one hundred years ahead, educate the people.
By sowing seeds once, you will harvest once.
By planting a tree, you will harvest tenfold.
By educating the people, you will harvest forever.

A poem by an anonymous Chinese poet, 420 BCE

May there be welfare to all beings;
May there be fullness and wholeness to all people;
May there be constant good and auspicious life to everyone;
May there be peace everywhere . . .
May all be full of happiness and abundance;
May everyone in the world enjoy complete health, free from diseases;
May all see and experience good things in their lives,
May not even a single person experience sorrow and misery.
Om!
Peace! Peace! Peace!

Daily prayer of Hindus

It's time for elders to listen to the child's voice. You see, in the child's mind there is no demarcation of different nations, no demarcation of different social systems of ideology. Children know in their minds that all children are the same, all human beings are the same. So, from that viewpoint, their minds are more unbiased. When people get older, though, they start to say, "our nation," "our religion," "our system." Once that demarcation occurs, then people don't bother much about what happens to others. It's easier to introduce social responsibility into a child's mind.

By His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama,
TENZIN GYATSO in *My Tibet* (written with Galen Rowell).
As excerpted in *A Sourcebook for Earth's Community of Religions*
(Grand Rapids, Mich.: CoNexus Press).
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Section 5

Educational Resources for All Age Groups

An integral part of the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths is the opportunity for congregations and communities to put their faith into action. In order to act effectively, we must first understand the problems and solutions. The following resources in the Christian and Jewish traditions will serve as a guide as you plan learning experiences about the importance of child care and raising children as seen through the lessons and models of your faith tradition.

Lesson plans are provided for the preschool level through adulthood as well as for intergenerational experiences. You may use them during the usual education time for your congregation or plan a special educational event at another time during the Children's Sabbath weekend.

Christian Lesson Plans

Rev. Dr. Susan Willhauck*
Minister of Education
Messiah United Methodist Church
Springfield, Va.

Each lesson will have a gathering, prayer, and introduction component. You may want to set the tone by preparing a sacred space to be used as the center point for prayer at the beginning and end of the lesson. This area may include a table with a candle, Bible, flowers, and sacred or secular symbols that pertain to the lesson. Welcome the students as they arrive and gather them within the sacred space, explaining the significance of the items chosen to be part of the sacred space. You may want to join in a simple prayer, perhaps inviting a member of the group to lead the prayer and then briefly explain what you will be doing during your time together.

**The author and CDF would like to thank Sister Danielle Jacob, CSFN, Diane Mullins, and Kim Siprut of St. Emily's Catholic School, Mt. Prospect, Ill., for their suggestion of the use of a "sacred space" in these lesson plans.*

Lesson Plan for Preschool Children

Theme God Cares!

Scriptural Passages

How certain your promise is! How I love it!

Psalm 119:140
(Good News Bible, Today's English Version)

Will God be slow to help God's people?

Luke 18:7b
(Good News Bible, Today's English Version)

Focus God has promised to take care of us. God's people can take care of others.

Lesson Objectives

The children will learn:

- How people care for babies.
- How God loves and cares for us.
- How children are important to the church.
- God's promise for us and how we care for others.

Materials

Baby doll or dolls, baby doll blanket, other doll items such as a baby bottle and clothing, a permanent marker, large square of canvas fabric, washable paints (or instant camera) and crayons, old file folders (or cardboard), children's scissors, glue stick, 1-inch wide ribbon cut into 3-inch long strips, and masking tape

Follow-up Suggestion

Donate the baby dolls to a child care facility after you have used them.

Preparation

Step 1: Wrap the baby doll in the blanket and place it somewhere in your classroom.

Step 2: Set out canvas and paints. Write "Little Hands Need Our Help" at the top with the permanent marker.

Step 3: Photocopy the "God Loves Me" button (See page 71). Make one copy for each child.

Step 4: Cut out circles the same size as the button from the file folders or light cardboard. Cut ribbon strips.

Step 5: Set out the copies of the button, scissors, glue stick, and crayons.

Overview

Gathering, Prayer and Introduction: Read the two Bible verses, say a prayer, and introduce lesson.
Baby Doll Demonstration
Activity: Hand Print Banner.
Activity: Make Buttons.
Closing: Songs and Prayer

Gathering, Prayer and Introduction

Baby Doll Demonstration

Tell them that there is something very special in the room. Ask them to see if they can find it. Tell them to "keep the secret" when they find it. Have all children look around the room and identify the baby doll as the special object.

Pick up the baby doll and invite the children to join you in a circle. (You may wish to have more than one baby doll, such as a girl and a boy, or dolls representing differing ethnic groups.)

Ask the children what is needed to take care of a baby. They may share answers such as feeding the baby, giving the baby a bottle, diapering the baby, and dressing the baby. Ask them what other things adults do to care for babies. Help them to name things like rocking the baby, putting the baby in a car seat, teaching the baby to crawl or walk.

Talk about how babies need love and a good start in life. Have the children pass the baby doll around the circle with each child taking a turn at rocking the baby, cuddling with it, dressing it, or acting out some way to care for a baby such as putting it in a car seat. Set a time limit for each child to hold the baby doll before passing it. Talk about how God loves all children and how God cares for us.

Activity

As the children finish holding the baby doll explain that it is time for the baby to take a nap. Pretend to put the baby to sleep in a safe place. Invite the children over to the table where you have set out the canvas and paint. Explain that they will be making a banner for the church. Ask the children to draw pictures of people who take care of them, e.g., mothers and fathers, grandparents, babysitters, aunts and uncles, and teachers at the child care center.

Ask them to draw things that show the love that these people have for them (e.g., hearts, two people hugging, etc.). As the children are working, explain that those who take care of them are very special people and that God loves both you and them very much. Tell them that because this banner shows such special people that are very important to the children and the church, they will hang the banner for everyone to see.

Show the children where their banner will be displayed. You may also want to send some of the banners to local, state, or federal elected officials as a means of calling their attention to the need to improve quality and affordability of child care and after-school programs.

Activity

Remind the children of God's special love for each of them and that one way that we experience God's love for us is through the people who love us and care for us. Ask the children to go to the table where you have set out the copies of the "God Loves Me" buttons. Have them color the buttons. Help children cut around the circle. Help them glue the button to the file folder or cardboard circle that you have cut. Attach two strips of colorful ribbon to the bottom of the button. Tape the button on each child with masking tape as they prepare to leave class (after the closing.)

Closing

Have the children join in the singing of "Jesus Loves Me." Close by having the children hold hands while saying the following prayer with you:

> Dear God, thank You for Your promise to care for us. Thank You for all of the grown-ups who take care of us. We know You will not be slow to help us. You will be quick to fill our need! In the name of Jesus. Amen.

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Lesson Plan for Younger Children

(K-Grade 3)

Theme God Is So Good!

Scriptural Passage Luke 18:1-8

Focus God is just and will care for all God's people. God's justice is greater than that of a human judge.

Lesson Objectives

The children will learn:

- How adults can help children.
- How a widow received justice.
- That God's justice is great.
- How to help a child attend a child care program, an after-school program, or summer camp.

Materials

Several pictures of adults helping children, strips of colored construction paper (2 to 3 inches wide and 8 to 10 inches long), markers, glue sticks, chalkboard or newsprint, and white paper

Preparation

Step 1: Locate several pictures of adults helping and interacting with children from magazines or newspapers.

Step 2: Cut strips of construction paper and gather markers and glue sticks.

Step 3: Write the list of new words on chalkboard or newsprint. The new words include *parable, widow, persistent, judge,* and *opponent.*

Step 4: Make copies of the playlet "I'll Be Back." (page 74)

Step 5: Contact the appropriate denominational program staff to offer your help in sending a child to camp. In some cases, they will send you a picture and give you the name of a particular child. Or contact a local child care program, after-school program, or summer program and offer your help in providing funding for a scholarship or needed items.

Overview

Gathering, Prayer, and Introduction
Make a Paper Chain.
Circle Time: Introduce the new word list and then read and act out the story.
Application: Make Collection Boxes.
Game: Widow's Relay
Closing: Song and Prayer

Gathering, Prayer and Introduction

Make a Paper Chain

Invite them to a table where you have placed markers, construction paper strips, glue sticks, and pictures of adults helping or interacting with children. Ask the children to think of one word that describes what the adults are doing in the pictures such as *care, help, teach,* and *pray.* After they have chosen a word, invite each child to write that word on one of the strips of construction paper. Help younger children write their word. Invite them to link the strips together using the glue to make a paper chain.

Later on, display the chain on a bulletin board under the heading: "Link Together to Help Children." You can either post the magazine pictures used in the lesson or photographs of congregation members helping your children.

Circle Time

Call children to sit in a circle with you. Point to the new word list you have written on the chalkboard. Discuss the meaning of each word. Ask the children to help you define them:

- *parable:* A kind of story that Jesus told to teach something.
- *widow:* A woman whose husband is dead.
- *persistent:* Not giving up.
- *judge:* Someone who makes decisions about questions brought before a court.
- *justice:* When things turn out right; fairness.

Read Luke 18:1-8 to the children. Ask them to listen for some of the words listed on your sheet. Pass around copies of the playlet. Choose a student to be the judge and another to be the widow. These should be students who can read. Ask the remaining students to play the part of the crowd. For younger classes have another adult read the script with you as the students play the crowd.

After you have finished acting out the playlet, talk about the parable. Ask the children how the widow finally got justice. Make the point that Jesus was contrasting God and the judge. Jesus told the parable to teach how much more God cares for us than the judge. God is good and will bring justice much more quickly than the judge. Ask what we can learn from this parable. Talk about how we need to be persistent in seeking justice and how God greatly cares for all God's people. Ask the children to name ways that your church cares for children.

Application

Invite children to make collection boxes. (Use the collection box diagram provided on page 75.) Explain that your class is going to collect money to help other children in your community. The money could go to a local child care program, an after-school program, or to help a child attend summer camp.

Give each child the paper for the collection box. Show them how to fold the paper box. Invite them to decorate the outside of their boxes. Send the boxes home with each child with the following note attached:

> Dear Parents:
>
> Our class is going to [list your option]. Please have your family collect coins for three weeks and then have your child bring his or her box back to class on [insert date]. Thank you.
>
> [Signed with your name]

Game

The Widow's Relay requires some open space. You may wish to go outside or to a larger room for this activity. Have the children form two teams. Ask a volunteer to be the judge. Have the two teams line up beside each other in two single file lines. Have the judge stand some distance away.

Explain that the two teams are the "widows" and that each person must make three trips to the "judge" before he or she can tag the next person. On each trip the widow must do something different. For example, on the first trip she may run; on the second trip she may skip; on the third trip she may hop on one foot. The judge should watch each widow to make sure she does three different styles. On the third trip the widow must tag the judge, then go back and tag the next person in line. This person becomes the widow, and the relay proceeds until one team is finished.

After this active game, talk about how God is so good and faster to act for justice.

Closing

Remind the children to take home their collection boxes and save their coins and bring them back. Teach a song such as "God Is So Good," from the *We Sing Bible Songbook*, and sing it together. Have the children join in saying the following prayer:

> Dear God, thank You for answering our prayers and caring for us. Help us to make this a better world. Amen.

Playlet

I'll Be Back: The Parable of the Widow and the Judge

Judge [in a big voice]: I am an important judge. I am not afraid of anything or anybody. People are afraid of me. I sit in my court all day long and people do what I say.

Crowd: [oohs and aahs]

Widow: I am a widow. People in my city don't think widows are very important. I have a problem and I'm going to see if this judge can straighten it out.

Crowd: You go, girl!

Judge [to the widow]: What do you want?

Widow: Judge, someone is treating me unfairly, and I need you to help.

Judge: Go away, I don't have time for this.

Widow: Okay, but I'll be back. [Widow leaves.]

Crowd: She'll be back.

Judge: On with the next case.

Widow [returning to the scene]: Judge, Judge, I have problem.

Judge: What are you doing here?

Widow: I want justice.

Judge: Case dismissed! Get out of here!

Crowd: [whisper to each other angrily]

Widow: [leaves slowly, like she doesn't want to]

Judge: I am a very important man. I have no time for widows.

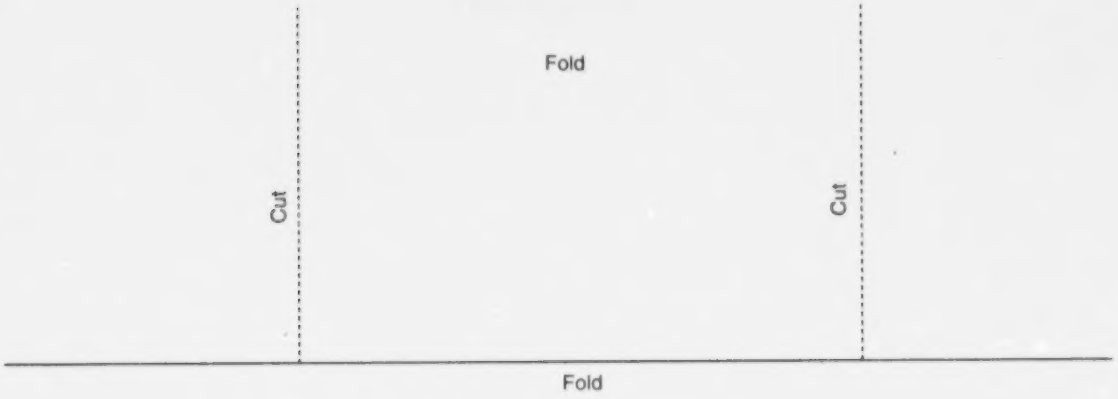
Widow [returning]: Judge, please listen to me.

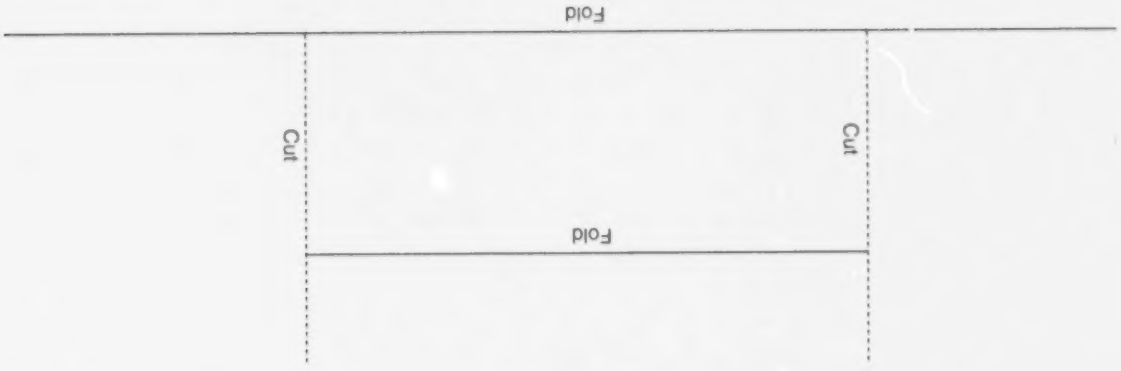
Crowd: Listen to her!

Judge: Okay, okay. You're just going to bug me to death if I don't. I will see that you get justice in this matter.

Crowd: [cheers]

Collection Box





Lesson Plan for Older Children
(Grades 4-6)

Theme Make It Plain!

Scriptural Passages Habakkuk 2:1-4 and Luke 18:1-8

Focus We can help others to know God's vision for justice.

Lesson Objectives

The children will learn:

- What they need and how their church cares for them.
- How God asks us to share God's vision for justice.
- To express God's vision of justice for children.
- About the importance of child care.

Materials

Bible, pencils and markers, poster board cut in highway sign shapes, copies of the "think sheet" (one per student), paper for letters, a CD or tape player, and a CD or tape of the song "The Greatest Love of All" (Whitney Houston or George Benson version)

Preparation

Step 1: Copy the attached think sheet, one per student.
Step 2: Gather markers and poster board and make sample highway sign.
Step 3: Invite a child care provider to come speak to your class or provide paper and pencils for letters that will be written by the children.
Step 4: Obtain a copy of the song, "The Greatest Love of All."

Overview

Gathering, Prayer, and Introduction
Think Sheet
First Bible Lesson: Habakkuk 2:1-4
Activity: Make highway signs of God's justice.
Second Bible Lesson: Luke 18:1-8
Activity: Listen to a child care provider or write letters.
Closing: Chant, Song, and Prayer

Gathering, Prayer and Introduction

Think Sheet

Direct them to a table where you have placed the attached think sheet and pencils. Invite them to complete the activities on the sheet. Interact with the children and help them make their lists of what children need. Allow the children to work together. When all the children have had a chance to work on the think sheet, talk about their answers.

First Bible Lesson

Invite the children to sit comfortably and listen as you read the scripture from Habakkuk. Explain that Habakkuk was a prophet who is asking God for justice. Ask them, "What is a prophet?" Help them understand that a prophet in the Bible was a person who brought God's message to the people.

Explain that Habakkuk sees some good and faithful people being treated badly and so he asks God for help. God answers Habakkuk by telling him to "Write the vision! Make it plain so all can read it!" Ask the students if they have ever been confused or mixed up about something. Explain that God wants people to make God's vision clear so that we may understand it better. Ask them: "What is justice? What is the vision?" Explain that the vision God is talking about is when all people live faithfully. Talk about what faith means. God asks the people to wait and work faithfully for justice.

Activity

Tell the students that the class is going to make highway signs of God's justice. Show them some shapes of highway signs and the sample you have made. Ask the students what road signs do. They may give answers like give us direction, tell us when to stop, or warn us of slippery roads. Some sample signs might read:

- Stop Injustice!
- Warning! God's Children Ahead.
- Live Faithfully; Work Needed.
- God's Vision in the Making.
- Precious Cargo; Yield . . . to the Needs of Children.
- Justice May Come Slowly . . . but It Will Come.

When the children have completed their signs, help them to hang them around the classroom or church. Walk around and read each one aloud in unison.

Second Bible Lesson

Read or tell the parable of the widow and the judge from Luke 18:1-8. Explain that this parable is another example of God's justice. Talk about how the widow keeps coming back and the judge finally gives in. Ask the students to tell about a time they did not give up or a time when they have been encouraged to keep trying. Explain how Jesus told His listeners that God's justice is more certain and quicker than that of the judge in the parable. Talk about what God's justice for children means.

Activity

Option 1

Ask the students to reflect of the following questions:

- What after-school activities are available to you in your congregation or community?
- Are they safe, fun and worth your time? Do they give you opportunities to learn and use your talents?
- What suggestions do you have for how to start or improve local after-school programs?

Have the students gather in small groups and discuss their answers to these questions and write down the suggestions for new or improved activities. A spokesperson for each of the small groups can share their ideas with the entire group. The written suggestions can then be shared with the congregation leadership, requesting a response to the group.

Option 2

Have students write a letter to a person who works in an after-school program or a teacher thanking them for what they do and for their contribution to justice for children.

Closing

Teach the students the following chant or cheer: "Write the vision. Make it plain. Care for children. I'll tell you *a-gain*!"

Repeat several times, starting softly and getting louder each time. Try an echo chant. Divide the class into two groups. Half say, "Write the vision," and then the other half echoes that.

Play the CD or tape of the song, "The Greatest Love of All." Close by praying:

> Dear God, thank You for the prophet who told us to make Your vision plain and for the story of the widow who kept trying for justice. Help us to care for one another and bring about Your vision. Amen.

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Think Sheet

1. List some things that children need to grow up healthy and safe.

2. Draw a picture of people in your church caring for children.

3. Find these words from today's Bible lesson:

watchpost	judge	justice
plain	parable	
vision	widow	

E	U	I	K	U	W	S	V	W
P	A	R	X	G	O	O	I	A
J	U	K	L	P	D	R	P	T
J	U	D	G	E	I	T	L	C
S	W	S	D	O	W	G	A	H
F	Q	W	T	Y	R	M	I	P
H	V	I	S	I	O	N	N	O
T	O	P	N	W	C	Z	G	S
P	A	R	A	B	L	E	V	T

Lesson Plan for Junior High School Students

Theme Armed with Love

Scriptural Passages Habakkuk 2:1-4, Psalm 119:137-144, and Luke 18:1-8

Focus What we can do to care for, love, and support children

Lesson Objectives

The participants will:

- Reflect on themselves as children and on the care they received.
- Learn how God loves justice.
- Learn what is needed for youth in the church to help care for and bring justice for children.

Materials

Crayons and markers, newsprint, card stock weight paper or poster board, CD or cassette player, CD or tape of "Lean on Me," and copies of the "coat of arms" you will create from the model provided on page 81 (one per student)

Preparation

Step 1: Copy the coat of arms, one per student.
Step 2: Write the slogan "Child Care NOW!" vertically down the side of a piece of newsprint or poster board. Hang it on the wall of your classroom.
Step 3: Make pattern of a soft drink bottle.
Step 4: Obtain a tape or CD of the song, "Lean on Me."

Overview

Gathering, Prayer, and Introduction
Coat of Arms
Bible Study: Paraphrase and illustrate.
Activity: Create an acrostic (see model on page 80).
Activity: Give up a soft drink.
Closing: Song and Prayer

As you direct the young people to their working space, give each one a copy of the coat of arms. Ask them to complete it with pictures and words. When they are finished, have them share their coat of arms with the group. After all have had a chance to share, reflect on the care and support given to them now as well as when they were younger and on the need for home, community, and school support for children today.

Gathering, Prayer, and Introduction

Bible Study

Divide the students into three groups. Assign each group one of the three scripture passages: Habakkuk 2: 1-4, Psalm 119:137-144, or Luke 18:1-8. Give each group some newsprint and markers and ask them to work as a team to paraphrase their scripture passage and illustrate it.

Explain that they are to say what the scripture says in their own words and draw some pictures to help others understand what it means. Give the groups time to work together, then ask each group to share their paraphrase with the others. Ask the students to make a list of the ways they could help children. Some of their answers might include: babysitting occasionally for a single parent, offering to run errands for parents in the church or neighbors, volunteering to help coach a team or work with children with disabilities, tutoring a young child, or helping in the children's nursery at church.

Activity

Have the students create an acrostic-type verse from the slogan "Child Care NOW!" Explain that through the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths, congregations throughout the country are turning their attention this weekend to what they can do to provide better care for children locally and nationally. On a piece of newsprint, you have hung on the wall, write verbs that your students suggest that describe what they need to do

to care for children. For each letter in the slogan, they should think of a verb. Plan to display your acrostic on a bulletin board.

For example, one acrostic may look like this:

C–commit	C–connect	N–network
H–heal	A–advocate	O–organize
I–involve	R–relate	W–welcome
L–love	E–educate	
D–discern		

Activity

Explain that the class can help a child attend a child care, after-school care, or summer program. See the Lesson Plan for Younger Children section for information on how to identify a child or a program to help. Invite the students to give up a soft drink during the week in order to help a child. Pass out card stock or poster board. Have them draw and cut out cards in the shape of soft drink cans or bottles. (You may wish to make a pattern for them to use.) Have them write on one side, "Give Up a Treat, Help a Child."

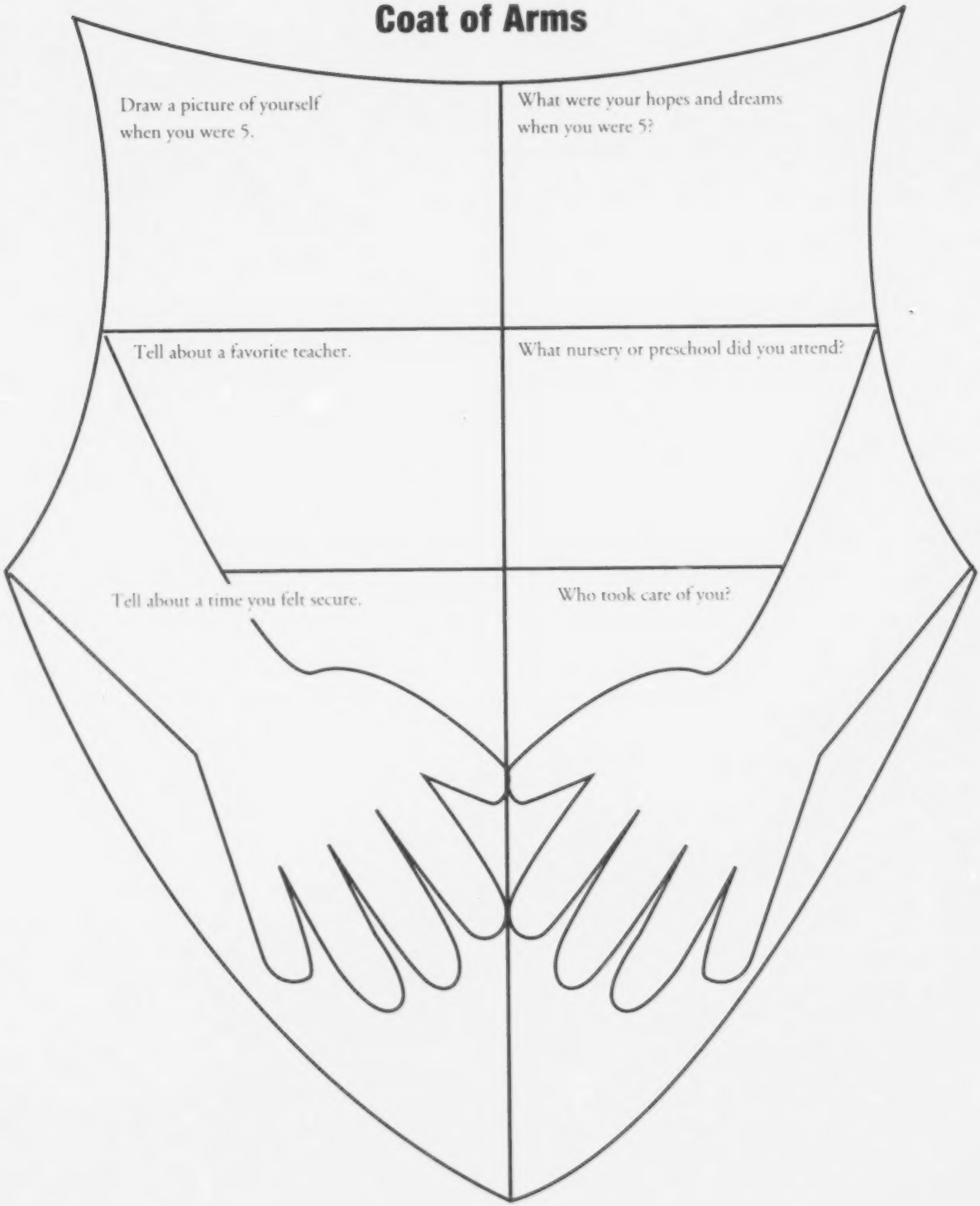
On the other side, write: "Bring your soft drink money to church next week. Help send a child to a child care program." Ask the students to make as many of the cards as they can. Have them stand in the hall after class and pass out the cards to church attendees. These may be used as bookmarks. Prepare to bring containers to collect the change the following week. You may cover soft drink cans with paper marked: "Drop your soft drink money here. Send a child to a summer program." Or obtain some of the large plastic banks that are replicas of soft drink bottles and place these around the church.

Closing

Play the song, "Lean on Me." Encourage the students to sing along. They may wish to create dance movements to accompany the song. Close by praying:

> Loving God, You have given us so much love through the care of our parents, teachers, neighbors, friends and family. Help us to share that love with the children in our community and throughout our country. Amen.

Coat of Arms


Draw a picture of yourself when you were 5.
What were your hopes and dreams when you were 5?
Tell about a favorite teacher.
What nursery or preschool did you attend?
Tell about a time you felt secure.
Who took care of you?

Lesson Plan for Senior High Youths

Theme Finding Faith

Scriptural Passages Luke 18:1-8 and Habakkuk 1:1-3; 2:1-4

Focus There are great needs concerning child care. We can be faithful to the cry for justice.

Lesson Objectives

The participants will:

- Learn facts about child care.
- Learn about God's justice.
- Reflect on where we can find faith.
- Engage in advocacy for child care.

Materials

Newspapers and magazines with pictures, 5 or 6 feet of "butcher" paper, scissors, letter writing paper, pens, glue stick, newsprint and markers, index cards (optional), and Bibles (at least one for each two students)

Preparation

Step 1: Gather and set out newspapers and magazines.
Step 2: Write the title "Finding Faith" on the butcher paper, and hang it in the classroom.
Step 3: Find out about upcoming child care legislation.
Step 4: Gather and place Bibles around the room.

Overview

Gathering, Prayer, and Introduction
Bible Study: Group work with scripture
Application: Finding faith mural. Write a letter to your representative and senators.
Closing: Antiphon and Prayer

Gathering, Prayer, and Introduction

Bible Study

Invite one of the students to read Luke 18:1-8 and another to read Habakkuk 1:1-3; 2:1-4 aloud. Divide the class into two groups. Assign one group the Luke passage and the other, the Habakkuk passage. Give each group newsprint and allow them time to answer the following questions on their newsprint:

- What are the main ideas of this passage?
- What does it say about God?
- What does it say about us?
- What does it say about the world?

Have each group select a spokesperson to report their answers to the large group. Then ask the group to name and talk about places and times where evidence of faith can be found. Ask them where have they seen people acting faithfully in bringing about God's justice. Ask: "If Christ returned today, where would He find faith?" You may ask them to write their answers on index cards and pass them in to you. You may then wish to read some aloud to the group.

Application

Activity 1

Create a finding faith mural. Pass around the newspapers and magazines. Have the students look for and cut out several pictures of people and children in need. Explain that you are going to ask them to share where faith could be found or what being faithful would look like in that situation. Instruct them to glue their pictures on the butcher paper and to write a caption under their picture that says where faith could be found. After they have completed this activity, have the students share their pictures and captions.

Activity 2

Have the students discuss the after-school activities or programs that are available to them in their community. Then ask them to compose a class letter to your U.S. representative and senators addressing the needs for more safe and constructive after-school programs. Explain that Congress is considering important legislation about this issue and that Christians have a commitment and responsibility to be advocates. Contact CDF's Child Care Division, 202-662-3544, for up-to-date information concerning current legislation or visit CDF's Web site at www.childrensdefense.org. Ask one of the students to take the letter home and type it. Have the student return it the following week, ready for everyone's signatures. Address as follows:

The Honorable [fill in name]
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable [fill in name]
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Activity 3

Ask the students to make a list of the ways they could help children in their congregation or neighborhood. Some of their answers might include: babysitting occasionally for a single parent, offering to run errands for parents in the church or neighbors, volunteering to help coach a team or work with children with disabilities, tutoring a young child, or helping in the children's nursery at church. Have them pledge to offer some type of service to the children in their community and report back to the group about the meaning of their experience.

Closing

Ask the students to find Psalm 119:137-144 in their Bibles and to read it as an antiphon. Invite half of the class to read the first line of this passage and the other half to follow with the next, continuing with the two groups reading every other line. Close by praying that we may be faithful in caring for children and bringing about God's justice.

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Lesson Plan for Adults

Theme The Gift of Hospitality

Scriptural Passages Assorted verses (listed separately below) and Luke 18:1-8

Focus Quality, affordable child care is a critical need. As God has given us hospitality, let us offer hospitality to our nation's children.

Lesson Objectives

The participants will learn about:

- Child care needs.
- The biblical theme of hospitality.
- The child care needs of their community and how they can respond.

Materials

Index cards and writing materials

Preparation

Step 1: Copy the six child care facts on one side of index cards and the Bible verses on the reverse side.

Step 2: Review Bible study material.

Step 3: Invite a child care professional to speak to the group about the specific topics below.

Overview

Gathering, Prayer, and Introduction
Facts and Verses
Bible Study: Theme of Hospitality
Application: Speaker and Discussion
Closing: Quote and Prayer

Gathering, Prayer, and Introduction

Facts and Verses

As you move to your working space, give six participants the index cards you have prepared. Open the session by having them read the facts aloud. After each fact is shared, initiate some discussion by asking the following:

- Does this fact surprise you?
- How can the church have an impact here?
- Why should we work toward and advocate for better quality and more affordable child care and after-school programs?

Following the discussion, have the person read the verse on the reverse side of the card.

Fact: Every day, three out of five preschoolers are in child care. Children of working mothers are entering care as early as 6 weeks of age and can be in care for as many as 40 hours a week until they reach school age. Nearly 13 million preschoolers, including 6 million infants and toddlers are in child care.
Verse: Isaiah 25:4

Fact: A 1990 study found that eighth-graders left home alone after school reported greater use of cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana than those who were in adult-supervised settings. Juvenile crime peaks between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., the after-school hours when many children are unsupervised.
Verse: Hebrews 13:2

Fact: A recent national study found that almost half of rooms in centers serving babies and toddlers provided such poor quality care as to jeopardize children's health, safety, and development. Studies of home-based care produced equally troubling results. A report by the Carnegie Corporation confirmed that the quality of child care has a lasting impact on children's well-being and ability to learn. Children in poor quality child care have been found to be delayed in language and reading skills.
Verse: Matthew 25:34-35

Fact: About half of families with young children earn less than $35,000 per year. Child care is a major household expense for working families. Full-day child care costs $4,000 to $10,000 per year for one child, equal to what families can pay for college tuition plus room and board at a public university.
Verse: Deuteronomy 24:17-20

Fact: One out of three children of working mothers are either poor, even though their mother works, or would be poor if their mother didn't work. Even though some subsidies are available for low-income families, funds are severely limited. Only one in 10 eligible children who need help are getting any.
Verse: Deuteronomy 10:17-19

Fact: Good after-school activities for children and youth can be hard to find because options are inadequate in many communities. This problem is ever more serious in low-income neighborhoods—for example, only one-third of schools in low-income neighborhoods offered before and after-school programs in 1993.
Verse: Mark 9:37

Bible Study

Share the following story and description of hospitality from *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* by Marjorie J. Thompson (© 1995 Marjorie Thompson. Used by permission of Westminster John Knox Press).

> I had just graduated from college three months before. My mother [and I] were taking the trip of a lifetime, starting in Scotland. On this particular day, we had left Edinburgh to venture into the Scottish countryside. The legendary Highlands were carpeted in heather and chill mist. By the time our bus arrived in the isolated town where we would spend the night, darkness had fallen and it was pouring rain. The bed and breakfast we had arranged to stay in was already full. With no access to a telephone, we were simply given the name of another house to try. A cab dropped us in front of a home with no lights on. It was late and cold. Our legs and suitcases were dripping by the time we reached the door.
>
> A pleasant but surprised couple answered our knock. When we asked for accommodations, they explained apologetically that they already had a boarder for the night. Our faces must have fallen as low as our spirits. Where would we go at this hour in such a downpour, in a tiny hamlet that seemed to have folded up for the night? They told us to wait inside the door. We heard muffled voices consulting. A few moments later, we were being ushered with quiet smiles into a cozy and pleasant room. Grateful and relieved beyond telling, we didn't ask questions. We sank, exhausted, into deep sleep in a comfortable double bed.
>
> The next morning, the woman prepared a sumptuous Scottish breakfast for us: fruit juice, eggs, kippers, toast, butter, jam, and tea. It was not until we were packed and ready to leave that we discovered the extent of our hosts' generosity. With guest quarters already occupied, this couple had given us their own bedroom. They had slept in the living room.
>
> The experience is etched in my memory. This couple cheerfully sacrificed their comfort to meet our need. Not a hint of sullenness or resignation shadowed the act. It was a simple, straightforward expression of hospitality.

After the Reading

Offering hospitality, shelter, and nourishment to strangers and sojourners is a theme that runs through the Bible. It is difficult for us to understand, but in the ancient Near East hospitality was offered to complete strangers. In the Jewish and Christian traditions, hospitality was a duty, responsibility, and act of love. Hospitality begins with God. God has made a home, a dwelling place for us in creation itself. We are called to offer hospitality to one another. Today, one of the greatest needs for hospitality is for children. There is a tremendous need for better quality and more affordable child care. Children need shelter, a safe place to go, to be, and to grow. Ask the following questions:

- What is your most vivid memory of receiving hospitality? of giving it?
- Can you name an incident in which you may have been "entertaining angels unawares?"
- What are the most important ingredients of hospitality?
- How can we offer hospitality to children in our community?

Have someone read Luke 18:1-8 aloud. Ask:

- Where is there a lack of hospitality in this passage?
- What is Jesus saying about God's hospitality?
- Discuss what this parable says about God and about how we should live as Christians.

Application

Ask the child care professional you have invited to speak about what constitutes good quality child care, to share information and facts about the current number of children being served in your community and what the current needs are for better quality and more affordable child care and after-school programs in your community.

Discuss ways your congregation can respond to these needs. Consider forming a partnership with a child care center in which your congregation members volunteer their time and offer financial support. Or consider setting up a scholarship fund to help families who cannot afford child care. Brainstorm other options. Consider next steps for putting this into action.

Closing

Share the following from *The Wounded Healer* by Henri Nouwen:

> Hospitality is the virtue that allows us to break through the narrowness of our own fears and to open our houses to the stranger, with the intuition that salvation comes to us in the form of a tired traveler [add: or a lonely child or a rebellious young person]. Hospitality makes anxious disciples into powerful witnesses, makes suspicious owners into generous givers, and makes closed-minded sectarians into interested recipients of new ideas and insights.

Close by praying:

> Good and gracious God, giver of the gift of hospitality, as You are our shelter and strength, as You have provided a dwelling place for us, let us do so for the children of this nation and world. Help us to extend welcome, physical and spiritual nourishment, and a safe place for our children to be and become the gift that You created them to be. Amen.

Intergenerational Lesson Plan

Theme Get the Picture!

Scriptural Passage Habakkuk 1:1-3; 2:1-4

Focus All generations have a responsibility to each other and can link together to work for justice for children.

Lesson Objectives

The participants will:

- Learn how the different generations can help each other.
- Learn how a prophet asked God for help.
- Illustrate the need for quality child care.

Materials

Construction paper, several pieces of four different colors, plain white paper, crayons, glue, copies of the skit "A Visit from Habakkuk" (page 88), and a ball of yarn

Preparation

Step 1: Cut pictures of people of varying generations from magazines. These should include infants, preschoolers, youth, adults, and older adults. Glue these on four different colors of construction paper.

Step 2: Set pictures out randomly on a table in the classroom.

Step 3: Set up four circles of chairs in each corner of the room. Tape one sheet of each of the four colors of paper on the wall above each circle.

Step 4: Make copies of the skit.

Step 5: Ask someone to dress up as the prophet Habakkuk. Look through Christmas pageant costumes or make your own robe and headdress. This person should be ready to come forward at the appointed time in the session. The leader and Habakkuk should study the script.

Step 6: Set out plain drawing paper and crayons.

Overview

Gathering, Prayer, and Introduction
Select and discuss pictures.
Scripture Lesson: Skit and visit from a prophet
Application: "Get the Picture" Project
Closing: Song and Prayer

Gathering, Prayer, and Introduction

Discussion of Pictures

Invite participants to go over to the picture table and select a picture of someone who is from a different generation, either older or younger than themselves. After they have selected their pictures, instruct them to go to one of the four corners of the room that corresponds to the color of construction paper that backs their picture. For example, there might be a green circle, a red circle, a yellow circle, and blue circle.

Instruct participants to go to their circle and share the picture they chose and why they chose it. Very young children may work with an adult and stay in the circle with them. Participants should share what the person is doing in the picture, something about the generation of the person, some revealing characteristics or feelings that the picture evokes. Discuss ways that different generations help and care for each other, either as depicted in magazine cutouts or based on personal experience.

Scripture Lesson

Distribute copies of the skit "A Visit form Habakkuk." Ask for volunteers to be the interviewer and Habakkuk. Explain that this is a modern version of an ancient prophet's message. Instruct the remaining participants to play the part of the crowd. Go over the parts, so that nonreaders can participate. Present the drama. Explain that you are expecting a very important visitor. At this time Habakkuk should come forward. Conduct an interview with Habakkuk. Use the script on page 88.

Application

Even today, centuries after Habakkuk, God's vision of justice and care for all children is still not realized. Today, parents are struggling to support their families and ensure their children are safe and well cared for. The church has long understood its responsibility to provide for and nurture children's minds and bodies as well as spirits, and to speak out for justice on their behalf. In fact, churches are the largest provider of center-based child care. Who better than the churches, with the biblical call for justice and their experience of providing care for children, to help make the vision plain to today's families, communities, educators and legislators.

- Introduce the "Get the Picture" project (see Section 6). Invite participants to come to the tables where you have set out plain paper and crayons. The idea is to collect hand-drawn pictures of families who use or need child care, adding the message, "America's Families Need Quality, Affordable Child Care NOW!"
- Allow participants time to work on their drawings. Then send them to your representative and senators in Congress.
- Add a letter with your pictures (see Section 6) that urges your members of Congress to support legislation that will guarantee funds for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) to help states serve all low-income families who need child care help to work and support their families, and to improve the quality of child care and after-school experiences for all children. To identify your members of Congress, call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-224-2131 or visit www.congress.org on the Web. Address the mailing to:

The Honorable [fill in name]
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable [fill in name]
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Closing

Gather participants into a large circle. Start a ball of yarn around the circle with each person holding on and passing it on until it goes all the way around while the group sings "They'll Know We Are Christians." Close by praying:

> Dear God of all ages, bind the generations together so that we may love and serve You and one another. Today we pray especially for the children and those who care for them. Hear us now as we name aloud those who need Your special love and care . . . [pause so that people may name specific concerns. Perhaps you might ask one or two participants in advance to prepare to start it off so that others feel free to join in]. These things we bring before You in the name of Jesus, who said, "Let the children come unto me." Amen.

A Visit from Habakkuk

Interviewer: Excuse me, sir, could you tell us who you are?
Habakkuk: Why I'm just your average, everyday prophet.
Interviewer: Where are you from?
Habakkuk: Well, I'm from the 7th century BCE at a time when the Babylonians were in power.
Interviewer: What was going on back then?
Habakkuk [shaking his head, sadly]: I'm sorry to say those were bad times. There was a lot of cruelty and violence and evil and injustice.
Interviewer: Hmm. Sounds familiar. What did you do?
Habakkuk: I called upon the Lord. I asked the Lord to save us. You might say I registered a complaint with the CEO. Then I climbed up in a tower and waited for an answer.
Interviewer: Did you get one?
Habakkuk: You bet I did! The Lord said to me, "Habakkuk, take this down. Write it plain and clearly so everyone can read it (not in your usual chicken scratch). Put it in writing, because what I am about to say won't come true for a while, but eventually it will."
Interviewer: What was God talking about?-What did you write?
Habakkuk: A vision. A vision of peace and justice for all God's children. It may seem slow in coming, but wait for it.
Habakkuk [to the crowd]: Say it with me people! "Write the vision, make it plain."
[Crowd members repeat the words above.]

Jewish Lesson Plans

Lesson Plan for Preschool, Lower, and Upper Elementary Children

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Each section has an overview or Biblical story followed by specific instructions for tailoring the lesson for the appropriate age group. Each is designed for a one-hour period.

Theme

Child care is a basic and critical component for children's healthy development whether it is provided by parents, other relatives, or child care providers who provide center or home-based care. The stories of Moses's birth, childhood, and leadership of the Jewish people illustrate many of the integral qualities of good child care.

Lesson Objective

Children will become aware of the basic qualities of good child care that all children deserve, and of the ways in which the Bible and Jewish tradition reinforce the values of watching over children and those in need.

Materials

Chart paper, markers, large popsicle sticks, construction paper and/or card stock, glue, cotton balls (preschool), notecards (upper elementary), and large-sized construction paper and/or poster board

Teacher Preparation

For each grade level, read the stories provided ahead of time, adapting the texts to fit your children's age and background knowledge, if necessary. Prepare several cutout figures from construction paper, representing the following type of caregivers: mother, father, grandmother, uncle, aunt, babysitter, grandfather, neighbor, sister or brother, or preschool teacher.

Preschool

Divide chart paper into two columns (or use two sheets of chart paper.) Label the columns:

- "People Who Take Care of Us" (Use a picture or graphic to show a child with an adult.)
- "A Good Caregiver Is [fill in appropriate words]"

Prepare an outline of a sheep and of Moses the shepherd, one per child, an appropriate size for a popsicle stick puppet. Use card stock for durability.

Lower Elementary

Divide chart paper into two columns (or use two sheets of chart paper). Label the columns:

- "People Who Take Care of Us"
- "How Do I Take Care of Myself?"

Upper Elementary

Divide chart paper into three columns (or use three sheets of chart paper). Label the columns:

- "People Who Take Care of Us"
- "Qualities of a Good Caregiver"
- "Our Responsibilities Toward Our Caregivers"

Prepare several notecards with a basic quality of good child care written on each card: for example, a safe place, people who love children, people who are good teachers, or a place to have fun.

Activity 1: Connecting the Theme to Our Lives

Preschool

Ask the children: Who are the people who take care of you during the day, at night, and on weekends?

Paste up cutout figures of their responses, e.g., mother, father, grandmother, uncle, aunt, babysitter, grandparent, neighbor, child care provider, sister or brother, or preschool teacher on the first column of your chart paper.

Tell the children that today they will be learning about the Jewish tradition of protecting and caring for children. Tell them that each of them is cared for by special people and that there are certain qualities that make a good caregiver. Tell them that every child should receive good care.

Discuss what qualities make a good caregiver. Tell them: "You are all experts on this subject because you are cared for each day, so we are going to share what we think about what makes good child care." Provide the children with some ideas to start them off, such as:

- "My babysitter makes sure I eat healthy snacks."
- "My grandma gives me toys to play with and that makes me happy."
- "My mother takes me to the park to run around and get strong."
- "My child caregiver teaches me how to make things."

Record the children's ideas on the second chart. Allow some discussion and anecdotes as children get involved in the subject. Try to allow each child to provide an idea or a personal comment to be posted on the chart. You may want to use symbols that illustrate the qualities they list, such as *love = heart* or *healthy food = apple*.

Lower Elementary

Ask the students to call out the different types of people who take care of them and list them in Column 1. Then, create a second column entitled, "How do I take care of myself?" Ask the children to think about how they care for themselves. For example, ask them if they brush their own teeth, tie their own shoelaces, or do their homework.

Tell them to draw a picture of three things that they do to take care of themselves. Ask them how their different caregivers help them to do these special things. Give each student a piece of tape and ask them to come forward one by one to hang their drawing in the front of the room. Record the various things they drew in the second column of the chart.

Upper Elementary

Ask the students to name all the different types of people who care for them, such as parents, friends, teachers, mentors, coaches, family, neighbors, sisters, and brothers. Then ask them to name the qualities that make those individuals good care providers, e.g., they provide me with food, clothing, a safe place to live and play, they teach me new things, and they help me to grow and be happy.

Discuss what their responsibilities are to their caregivers. Ask them to share ideas about how they should treat their caregivers, e.g., be polite, listen and pay attention when your caregiver is talking to you, be kind. For the older students, you can list the titles from each of the three columns on a regular sheet of paper, and divide the young people into cooperative learning groups (small groups in which students are asked to work together and share ideas in order to complete the project.)

Ask each group to designate a "recorder" to list the members' ideas in the proper columns on the sheet. Another group member can serve as the "reporter" and feedback the ideas of the group to the entire class.

Activity 2: Connecting the Theme to the Bible

Introduce the storytelling by saying that there are stories in the Bible that show the value of good child care. Tell the children:

> We are going to hear some stories and I would like you to think of the lessons about child care we can learn from the stories. Then we will look back at our charts and see if we learned any new ideas about good child care, or if any of our ideas appeared in the stories.

Tell the story of Moses's birth in Egypt. An example story is provided below, based on the events of Exodus, Chapter 1. (Read the story in advance, and adjust it according to your class's needs and knowledge base.)

The Baby Moses

When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, Pharaoh gave a terrible order. He ordered that all Jewish boys be killed as soon as they were born. He wanted to make sure that no Jewish boy grew up to lead the slaves in a fight against him.

Well, all of the Jewish mothers were terribly sad and frightened by Pharaoh's order. They tried their best to save their sons, hiding them from Pharaoh. Pharaoh told the Jewish midwives (women who deliver babies), the women who helped mothers give birth, to immediately take any boy babies and kill them. But two midwives, Shifrah and Puah, knew how wrong this was and were brave enough to help the Jewish mothers. They went to Jewish homes and helped to hide the babies, telling Pharaoh that every baby was born a girl, so Pharaoh would not come for the babies. These two women were performing a dangerous mitzvah, saving the lives of the little children, protecting them from evil Pharaoh's order.

In the Bible, we hear the story of one special family who tried hard to save their baby boy, and they succeeded! The mother, named Yocheved, gave birth to a boy. Before anyone could notice and take her boy away, she wrapped him up in a blanket and placed him in a basket made from woven straw. Yocheved floated her baby's basket in the Nile River, hoping a nice Egyptian woman would find him and raise him safely as her own. She wanted to make sure that he stayed safe, so she sent her older daughter, Miriam, the baby's sister, to follow him and find out what would happen. Miriam hid as she watched the basket floating down the river.

Soon, she saw a princess, the daughter of Pharaoh, walk out toward the basket. The daughter of Pharaoh did not have a child of her own. When she saw the baby in the basket, she knew he must be a Jewish baby, and she felt sorry for him, so far from his mother and in such danger. So she decided to keep him and care for him and raise him as a prince in the palace. The princess named him Moses, which means "taken from the water."

As soon as Miriam saw that her brother was safe with the princess, she ran over to see how she could help her brother further. The princess needed someone to nurse the baby, as she had no milk. Miriam immediately told her that she knew a Jewish slave who could nurse the baby. The princess commanded her to get the nurse at once. Happily, Miriam ran to her mother and told her the good news about the baby.

And so it was that the real mother of Moses nursed him and secretly taught him that he was a Jew, not an Egyptian prince. Yocheved taught him Hebrew and all the history and meaning of being a Jew. Moses never forgot the love and teachings of his mother and grew up to be a kind, wise, brave man in the palace of Pharaoh.

Preschool

Ask the children how Miriam, Yocheved, and Pharaoh's daughter took care of the Baby Moses. Then, look back at the chart and add the ways in which Miriam and Yocheved were good caregivers.

Lower Elementary

Referring to the chart, join in a discussion with the children about the connections they may find between their ideas about "People Who Take Care of Us," and the key points of the story. Ask the children to add any new ideas to the chart based on the story.

Upper Elementary

Divide the students into small cooperative learning groups, and have them brainstorm the connections they found between their ideas from the first activity and the story of Moses as a baby. Assign each group the task of

asking for a volunteer "recorder" to take notes of the discussion on a paper that is a smaller version of the teacher's chart paper with the titles listed. Also, ask each group to identify a volunteer "reporter" who will share the group's key points of discussion with the entire class.

Introduce the next story by telling the children that Moses grew up and became the leader, the caretaker, of the entire Jewish people, the children of Israel. Explain that because they were slaves, Jews not used to taking care of themselves, even the adults, and so they were like children. God knew they needed a good leader to help them start a new life out of Egypt. See if during the following story, you can understand why God chose Moses for this important caretaker job.

Moses the Shepherd

A story is told about Moses when he worked as a shepherd in Midian. Before Moses was a leader of the Jewish people, he was a shepherd (Exodus 3:1). The midrash tells us that Moses was in charge of the care of hundreds of sheep. Sheep are creatures without a lot of understanding and without instincts to protect themselves, so they need special care, just as babies do. Moses knew every sheep under his care, despite the many he watched over. One morning, he noticed that one of the smallest of his flock was missing. Moses was worried about this baby lamb, even though he had so many others and this lamb was small and weak. Moses walked far, looking all throughout the hills for this one small sheep.

Finally, after hours of searching, Moses found his lost lamb. Moses gently picked it up and held it carefully, making sure it was not hurt. As he was carrying it gently back to the flock, he noticed a strange sight. A bush was burning brightly, but its leaves stayed green and the bush did not burn up. It was at this burning bush that God turned and spoke to Moses, asking him to be the leader of the Jewish people.

Rabbi Lawrence Kushner adds to this midrash and writes in *The Book of Miracles* (Jewish Lights Publishing, 1997. Used here with permission of the publisher):

> People usually explain that God used the burning bush to attract Moses's attention. But suppose you were God and could do anything you wanted—split an ocean, make the sun stand still, or set up a pillar of fire. Compared to such spectacular displays, a burning bush is not very impressive. So why did God choose such a modest miracle? Maybe the burning bush wasn't a miracle but a test. God wanted to find out if Moses could see mystery in something as ordinary as a little bush on fire. For Moses had to watch the flames long enough to realize that the branches were not being consumed and that something awesome was happening. Once God saw that Moses could pay attention and notice the small details with patience, God spoke to Moses and asked him to be the leader and caretaker of the Jewish people.

Preschool

Lead the children in a discussion of what made Moses a good caregiver. List the students' ideas on the chart, using simple symbols or pictures to convey their ideas.

Lower and Upper Elementary

After you read this story, discuss the ideas in it as they relate to Moses as a caregiver. Discuss what characteristics made him a fitting choice to care for and lead the Jewish people. Refer to the chart that lists "Qualities of a Good Caregiver" once more, and add to it if necessary, relating the ideas on the chart to this midrash.

Upper Elementary Option

Invite the children to discuss Moses's leadership qualities in cooperative groups or pairs. Then have them come together and record their ideas on a class chart, sharing their ideas with the larger group.

Activity 3: Reinforcement Activity

Preschool

Invite the children to make puppets using an outline of Moses as a shepherd and of a sheep. Divide the children into groups of two or three. Depending on time available, either have each child make both puppets, or pair the children and have one make a Moses puppet and the other a sheep puppet. Have the children color and cut out the characters, adding torn cotton balls to the sheep. Then glue the characters to large popsicle sticks. While the puppets are drying, have each pair draw a burning bush background on construction paper. They may want to use red, orange, and yellow tissue paper to make the bush more dramatic.

Introduce a role-playing activity in which the children will act out the story of Moses looking for the lost lamb, finding the lamb, and noticing the burning bush. Have the children use the puppets and their own words to act out the stories in pairs. You may have each pair perform their role-playing for the rest of the class or just circulate to make sure pairs are successfully re-enacting the scenes, demonstrating understanding of the story. Alternatively, you may simply retell the story while students use their puppets to enact the words you provide.

Lower and Upper Elementary

Divide the class into small groups (four to five students per group). Have each group choose (or have teacher assign) one of the Moses stories to create a small puppet show. Have the children make puppets of their characters and props (Baby Moses, Miriam, Moses's mother Yocheved, Pharaoh's daughter, several sheep, including a baby lamb, a burning bush, the Nile River, and a basket).

Have the children glue puppets and props to popsicle sticks and while the glue dries, have them practice a small skit of the story they have chosen. After the children practice the puppet shows, have them perform them for each other. Afterward, ask audience members to identify and discuss the qualities of good caregiving demonstrated in each skit.

Upper Elementary Option

Divide the class into groups of two or three. Give each group a card with a quality of good child care written on it (children are watched to make sure they don't get hurt; children are supervised and not left alone; the child has learning opportunities in their child care setting). Children have five to 10 minutes to think of a skit that would illustrate this quality (or the opposite of it) in a real-life situation. Invite the children to perform their skits for each other. Audience members try to guess the characteristic being illustrated by the skits, referring to Chart 2, "Qualities of a Good Caregiver" for ideas.

Activity 4: Conclusion

Preschool

Bring the children into a circle, with the charts visible. Conclude the lesson with a review of the list of people who take care of them. Tell the children that when mothers, fathers, babysitters, grandmothers, aunts, uncles, grandfathers, teachers, and neighbors take good care of them, they are following the Jewish value of protecting those who are in need. You may want to hold up the puppets of Baby Moses and the little sheep to connect the concept of those who are in need to the lesson and activity in a concrete way. End with a chance for each student to tell one thing that they are thankful for about a person who takes care of them.

Lower Elementary

Lead a concluding discussion, tying together all the ideas discussed throughout the lesson. Ask the children to name one new thing that they learned in this lesson. Emphasize the Jewish connection to the value of good child care and to caring for those in need.

If time allows, add a third category to the charts, asking: "How can we demonstrate the Jewish value of helping to care for others?" Record children's responses. End the discussion by encouraging children to share this morning's lesson with parents and caregivers at home.

Leave the charts on the walls of the classroom. Refer to the ideas on the charts when learning other Biblical stories about families and see what connections the children can find. Look for connections during lessons about other mitzvot to the mitzvah, or value, of good child care.

Upper Elementary

Lead a concluding discussion, tying together all the ideas discussed throughout the lesson.

For a future lesson or as a homework assignment, assign each child or a pair of children one quality of good child care and have the children make posters illustrating this quality with appropriate captions. Display these posters in the classroom or hallways with an appropriate caption, such as "All of Us Are Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children."

You may want to have a contest, choosing one or two of the posters to be printed in your congregation's bulletin or submitted to the local newspaper to promote the good work of your congregation in caring for children.

Lesson Plan for Middle School, High School, and Adult Classes

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This lesson discusses the Biblical precedents for child care and the Talmudic sources that define quality child care. Students will study the texts, apply the lessons to their own experiences with child care, and then craft an action plan for advocating for the quality child care that is called for in these texts.

The lesson is structured as follows:

- Presentation on Child Care
- Exploring Text and Tradition
  - Deborah, the Nursemaid of Rebecca
  - The Nursemaid of Moses
  - Talmudic Models

  Each section will include:
  - Background Information
  - Reading of the Text
  - Reflection and Discussion
- Classroom Activities
- Conclusion

Ideas are presented to guide you through each section. Adaptations should be made to respond to the needs, knowledge, and experience level of the particular age group. This lesson can be adapted for use by an intergenerational group as well. On the weekend of your Children's Shabbat, consider inviting parents and child care providers to Hebrew School to learn with their children and work together for improved child care and after-school programs.

Materials

Newsprint, photocopies of scriptural sources, poster board and markers, a cassette recorder and tapes, and a video camera (if available)

Teacher Preparation

Gather information, statistics, and stories about child care. (Refer to the bulletin insert in Section 3 for information.) and contact a local child care facility or children's service agency to obtain local information and statistics about child care in your community. List these statistics on a piece of newsprint and post it in the classroom. Prepare a short talk about the challenges many families face today finding affordable, quality child care.

Presentation on Child Care: Linking Modern Child Care with Biblical Child Care

Deliver a prepared talk about child care challenges today. Use statistics from the bulletin insert in Section 3 of this manual and point out the posted statistics.

Tell the students that although child care seems to be a modern concept, the practice of someone other that parents caring for children is at least 3,600 years old. The Bible presents two separate examples of child care. They come four generations apart.

Exploring Text and Tradition

Biblical Story: Deborah, the Nursemaid of Rebecca

Background Information

As part of your lesson presentation, share the following information with those gathered:

> Rebecca was the daughter of Bethuel and the sister of Laban—two of the greatest scam artists of the ancient world. One need only read Genesis 24 to see Bethuel out for monetary gain and even a superficial reading of Genesis 29-31 will reveal Laban's wicked activities:
>
> - Having Jacob work for him for seven years in order to marry Rachel and substituting Leah in her stead, necessitating Jacob's working an additional seven years.

- Attempting to cheat Jacob out of livestock by claiming that Jacob could take only the spotted sheep (his plan was foiled when all the sheep turned out to be spotted).
- Chasing Jacob to recover property that was rightfully Jacob's.

These are the main influences over Rebecca mentioned in the Bible. However, Rebecca had a nursemaid named Deborah. Deborah, the only other influence mentioned by name, must have been good and affected Rebecca positively as Rebecca is considered a righteous woman, one of the seven prophetesses. She became the wife of Isaac, and she had the insight to understand that Jacob was the rightful heir to his father Isaac.

Describe the context of Rebecca being chosen to marry Isaac and leaving her father's home. Describe the context of Deborah dying while traveling with Jacob, Rebecca's son.

Be sure to note that we don't know much about Deborah except that she was Rebecca's nursemaid and was with her at least from the time she went to marry Isaac until Jacob was already grown. Since there are few commentaries on these verses, we can conclude that a nursemaid is actually quite common.

Reading of the Text

Ask different participants to read the following: Genesis 24:59-61, Genesis 35:8, and Comment from Nachmanides to Genesis 35:8.

Comment from Nachmanides

Deborah was in Jacob's company because after accompanying Rebecca to the land of Canaan, she had returned to her country, and now she was coming with Jacob in order to see his mistress. It may be that she was engaged in raising Jacob's children out of respect for Rebecca and due to her love for her, and thus she resided with him. Now it is possible that she is not "the nurse" of whom it is said, "And they sent away Rebecca their sister, and her nurse," but that she was another nurse who remained in the house of Laban and Bethuel (Rebecca's brother and father) and now Jacob brought her with him to support her in her old age out of respect to his mother, for it was the custom among the notables to have many nurses.

Reflection and Discussion

Ask the participants to reflect on each of the passages and how they relate to modern child care. Then ask them to share their reflections with the entire group as you capture their ideas on the newsprint. If needed, raise the following questions to stimulate discussion:

- What can you infer about a caregivers loyalty to her or his charge?
- What can you conclude about respect for a dedicated caregiver by the family of those for whom she cares? How is or isn't this reflected today?
- Do you think Deborah was able to exert a positive influence on Rebecca to counteract that of Laban and Bethuel? Why or why not?
- What implications does this have for thinking about the work of caregivers and families today?

Biblical Story: The Nursemaid of Moses

Background Information

As part of your lesson presentation, share the following information with those gathered:

> Moses was raised in Pharaoh's house. The text tells us, "He was to [the daughter of Pharaoh] as a son." Pharaoh was afraid of the Jews, enslaved them, and oppressed them. However, Moses must have been strongly influenced by his nursemaid [in truth, his biological mother] during his early years, because despite growing up in the house of Pharaoh, his love, support, and defense of the Jews is endless. (See Exodus 2:11-15 for Moses's experience of killing an Egyptian he sees beating a Jew.) We see the tremendous positive effect of his early caregiver because of who he became—the leader of the Jews leaving Egypt. While we know that Moses's nursemaid was his mother, to the daughter of Pharaoh, she was just another nursemaid. This "nanny" raised him until he was grown. We are not sure of the definition of "grown," but it is at least until he was weaned, which was usually 3 years of age.

Reading of the Text

Invite one of the participants to read Exodus 2:1-10.

Discussion

In small groups, ask the class to discuss the story with a particular focus on the nursemaid as child care provider. Suggest they begin with the following questions:

- What is the significance of the nursemaid and mother being the same person?
- Does this tell us anything about how a caregiver should feel about a child and how the family should respect the child care provider?

As a reporter from each group shares their ideas with the entire class, record them on newsprint.

Talmudic Models

Background Information

School-age and even preschool children have a special status in Jewish law requiring additional measures to safeguard their well-being. They are referred to as "Tinokot Shel Beit Rabban" ("Very Young Students of the Schoolhouse"). This highlights their innocence and therefore their need for increased protection. The rabbis recognized this and so instituted legislation far beyond the norm for adults or older children in safeguarding and protecting them in the realm of child care.

Reading of the Texts

Ask different class participants to read aloud the Talmudic Models, Baba Batra 21a and 21b.

Baba Batra 21a

> Raba said: Under the ordinance of Joshua ben Gamala, children are not to be sent every day to school from one town to another (for fear they may come to harm on the way) but any parent can compel the community of his town to appoint a teacher. But they can be compelled to go from one synagogue to another (in the same town). If however, there is a river in between, we cannot compel them. But if, again, there is a bridge, we can compel them. Not, however, if it is merely a plank.
>
> Raba further said: The number of pupils to be assigned to each teacher is 25. If there are 50, we appoint two teachers. If there are 40, we appoint an assistant, at the expense of the town.

Baba Batra 21b

> Raba further said: A teacher of young children, a vine-dresser, a ritual slaughterer, a blood-letter, and a town scribe are all liable to be dismissed immediately if inefficient. The general principle is that anyone whose mistakes cannot be rectified is liable to be dismissed immediately if he makes one.

Reflection/Discussion

Raise the following questions for discussion:

Children cannot be sent to another city, or cross a river unless there is a well-built, safe bridge. (Safety is an essential value.)

- What important child care quality does this suggest?

One cannot have more than 25 students with one teacher. If there are more, an assistant must be appointed at the expense of the town. (A priority is placed upon giving children as much individual attention as possible.)

- What priority in child care does this imply?
- How is that quality experienced by children today in different settings (home, school, child care and after-school programs)?

An incompetent teacher must be removed immediately. (The quality of education and child care is extremely important.)

- What value does this stress?
- How is it reflected or not reflected today?

Ask the participants to reflect further on the points raised about the quality of child care, noting their comments from their previous discussion listed on the newsprint.

Classroom Activities

One of the ways that the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths attempts to mobilize congregations to renew their efforts with and on behalf of children is by promoting educational and advocacy initiatives. The following activities will provide the students with an opportunity to integrate the lessons they have learned with their experience of the child care needs in their congregation and community. The importance that the Jewish tradition places on quality child care as illustrated in the Torah and Talmudic texts, as well as their shared insights from the lessons, should assist them in developing their activities.

Creating an Advertising Campaign

Begin by telling the students that they will be asked to create an advertising campaign to educate their community about the need for better quality and affordable child care and after-school programs, locally and nationally. This will give them an opportunity to communicate, in a very practical way, the mandate for quality child care that the Jewish tradition embraces.

Prominently display a large sign or poster with the theme for this year's National Observance of Children's Sabbaths: Child Care NOW! Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children.

Ask the group to brainstorm about slogans and advertising concepts that could be used to emphasize the need for better child care and after-school programs. As they engage in this activity, ask them if they can think of examples in the Torah when the Jews were called to accomplish a goal as a community (e.g., when the Jews received the Torah on Sinai). This question might help the participants to make the link between their religious tradition and its application to their every day lives. List the ideas on newsprint.

Ask the students to gather in groups of three or four and, using the suggestions from the list of slogans, work together to develop ideas for their ad campaign.

Middle School Students

Have the students choose whether to write scripts for radio commercials or to draw print advertisements for the local community or Jewish newspaper.

High School Students

The small groups may choose between writing newspaper ads or writing a script for a television commercial that they will perform and record at the end of the session.

Adults

Write the texts for short talks to be delivered as a D'var Torah at an Oneg Shabbat or Shabbat meal. Or, adults can draft letters to the editor of the local community or Jewish newspaper, using both Biblical quotes and statistics. Be sure to leave time for the participants to share their letters or talks.

Conclusion

Thank the participants for bringing their creativity to the campaign and let them know you hope they will continue to contribute their creative energy and talent to advocating for safe, affordable, and quality child care and after-school programs. Encourage them to submit their letters or advertisements for publication or broadcast. Ask the class to nominate one letter or advertisement to be submitted and then be sure to follow up with the submission and then post the letter or advertisement in the synagogue.

Section 6

Children's Sabbath in Action

As people of faith, we respond to the call of our religious traditions to live our lives in service to God and our neighbors. We do this in part by investing our energies and resources in very practical ways. We hope and expect this will make a difference in our lives and the lives of our loved ones, our congregations, community, and nation.

The ultimate goal of the Children's Sabbath is to help improve the lives of children and their families. Whatever activities you select will help you build on the enthusiasm generated by your Children's Sabbath observance. It is important to select activities that are right and reasonable for your particular congregation and that meet the specific needs of children and families in your community. Consider the following questions when planning your Children's Sabbath and ongoing activities:

- What will help maintain the momentum initiated by our Children's Sabbath on behalf of children?
- What will help sustain our congregation's commitment to responding to the needs of children within our families, congregation and throughout the country?
- What will strengthen the impact of our Children's Sabbath?

Activity Ideas . . . Before, During, and After Your Children's Sabbath

Following are a few practical suggestions for activities that are meant for you to use or to spark your own unique ideas for engaging your local congregation and community before, during, and after your Children's Sabbath. These suggestions can serve as opportunities to enhance your congregation's activities such as:

- Social gatherings before or after worship services.
- Religious education programs.
- Children's or teen group meetings.
- Women's, men's, parent's or young adult group meetings.

Before the Children's Sabbath

♦ **Encourage everyone to bring a friend** to your Children's Sabbath, especially the children and youths in the congregation.

♦ **Invite families from child care programs** to participate.

♦ Since an essential part of the Children's Sabbaths is to advocate for policies and programs that will promote the well-being of all children, **invite local government officials to your Children's Sabbath service and related events**. Let them know about your ongoing children's initiatives and how they can be involved.

♦ **Solicit practical suggestions and recommendations from local child care providers and after-school programs about how congregation members can become involved** in assisting in the work of local centers and programs and/or advocating on their behalf. Prepare a flier with this information to be distributed to congregation members at your Children's Sabbath.

♦ **Conduct some simple research about the need for quality and affordable child care and after-school programs and the available resources in your community and state.** (Call CDF's Field Division at 202-628-8787 for assistance in obtaining this information.) Also, the staff of local children's social service agencies, child care centers, and various social, cultural, athletic, and educational after-school programs may be able to assist you in obtaining local information. This information can be circulated in a variety of ways to raise awareness about these concerns.

On the Children's Sabbath

♦ **Help educate community leaders, policy makers, and congregation members by organizing visits to local child care centers and after-school programs.** Find out what child care services are offered in your community, what other services are needed, and how individuals and organizations can get involved. CDF coordinates training for conducting site visits. For information, call the Child Watch Visitation Program at 202-662-3588.

♦ **Prior to your worship service, invite all present to spend a moment in silence and then, using pencils and colorful paper made available in each row of seating, write a prayer for the care and nurturing of the children in your congregation and children everywhere.** Write the first name of a particular child and someone who cares for a child at the end of the prayer. Have the children collect these prayers in a glass bowl, which can be placed prominently for all to see and serve as a symbol of unity in support of children.

During the service, you may invite various individuals such as a child care worker, a teen mentor, a parent, or a school teacher to read some of the prayers to the congregation. As the congregation disperses, invite each person to take one of the prayers from the bowl home with them and to pray for that child and child caregiver.

♦ **Distribute an information sheet with a list of attributes descriptive of high-quality child care.** Call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246 for resources.

♦ **Host a town meeting.** Learn more about child care and after-school initiatives and what you can do. Invite a speaker or panel of speakers familiar with child care to host an interactive town meeting engaging with the participants about the need for quality, affordable child care and after-school programs, solutions, and opportunities for action. Also, have someone speak about available resources. Consider inviting a staff member of your congregation's child care center or a community child development center, an elementary school teacher and administrator, the director of the local Boys and Girls Club, a "stay-at-home" parent providing care for her or his children and perhaps other children, staff from a program providing services to children with disabilities, the director of the local Head Start program, staff from a local child care resource and referral service or child care association, a professor from a local school, college, or university with early childhood education programs, the coordinator of a local peer mentoring program for children or teens, staff from a state child care licensing office, or other local religious organizations or coalitions that provide child care and after-school programs for their children. Invite a member of your congregation who is a child care professional to help coordinate and serve as moderator for this town meeting.

♦ **Speak up for Child Care NOW!** CDF can provide you with a Child Care NOW! campaign Organizer's Kit. This kit provides a vast array of action ideas for local, state, and national involvement.

♦ **Have a table with letter-writing materials available.** Provide paper, pens, envelopes, stamps, and addresses of members of Congress. Provide background information and sample letters on legislation affecting child care and after-school programs. (Photocopy the sample letter to Congress and the flier at the end of this section.) In addition to requesting the CDF Organizer's Kit, contact your denomination's public policy, social justice, or child advocacy office for information and sample letters.

♦ **Host a "Care for Children Fair."** Invite representatives from various organizations and agencies in your community whose mission and work focus on the provision of care for preschool children as well as after-school programs for children. Have them bring information describing their agencies and their services to distribute. If your congregation houses a child care center, arrange

for tours of the facility explaining the services and how volunteers can help. Also, include representatives from agencies that support and strengthen parents, such as parent education or family support programs. Ask them to provide a list of options for how children, youth, and adults can get involved in the work of their organization. A story-telling nook, an ice cream scoop counter, simple but colorful decorations, and the presence of local elected officials and celebrities may increase community participation.

♦ **Engage in the "Get the Picture" Project**. The goal of this project is to send drawings of families who need child care to members of Congress to show strong support for child care. This can serve as an activity in your religious education classes. As a follow-up, you can also reach out to local child care and after-school programs, schools, other congregations and religious organizations, and community centers to invite them to participate in this project. (See the flier at the end of this section and distribute it throughout your community.)

Another idea is to **have young children make plaster hand print paperweights**. When dry, write the words "Remember the Children: Child Care NOW!" and send the paperweight to your members of Congress.

After Your Children's Sabbath

It is important to bring closure to your Children's Sabbath and to evaluate it in order to lay the groundwork for your ongoing efforts and next year's observance.

♦ **Convene the Children's Sabbath working group for follow-up planning and implementation**.

♦ **Write thank you notes** and publicly recognize leadership because you want to maintain good relationships with your friends, congregation members, and community colleagues.

♦ **Consider presenting certificates of appreciation**, acknowledging the hard work and dedication of all who provided leadership in planning, promoting, and implementing the Children's Sabbath events.

♦ **You may want to develop a simple survey** to be distributed at worship services on the Children's Sabbath. Ask for feedback on what was most meaningful about your Children's Sabbath. Include a response form that list options for ongoing involvement, as well as asking for ideas.

♦ **Have an exploration evening** to call other congregations, churches, synagogues, and mosques together to learn if they hosted a Children's Sabbath. Find out what was involved in their efforts and inform them of your event and follow-up initiatives. This may present an opportunity to form new partnerships or strengthen old ones to work on behalf of your children and children throughout the country.

♦ **Plan early to help spread the word about next year's Children's Sabbath (October 15-17, 1999)** among other congregations in your community and consider organizing an ecumenical or interfaith service in your community. This event may be followed up by an ongoing coalition effort responding to your children's most critical needs. CDF's Field Division can inform you of local coalition initiatives, which can serve as models for action in your community.

Continuing Your Education, Service, and Advocacy

Education

Learn More!

Tap into your denomination's public policy, social justice, or child advocacy/children's concerns offices. Find out about their resources and how they can support you in your efforts. Obtain copies of policy statements that have been issued on child care and convene a short-term study group to discuss the practical implications for your congregation and local opportunities for action.

Participate in child advocacy training opportunities sponsored by community, regional, and national organizations. Recruit and train other congregation members to be child care advocates.

Use the Internet! It provides easy access to a wealth of information about children's issues and child advocacy organizations. CDF's Web site is www.childrensdefense.org.

Create a brochure of child care, tutoring, after-school, and recreational programs and distribute to your congregation and in the community.

Spread the Word!

Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about the need for increased quality and affordable child care and after-school programs in your area and encourage strong local action.

Submit short reports on child care issues and ask to have them printed in your congregation's newsletter.

Design a community-wide "Child Care Day" with other congregations, religious organizations, and child care agencies to focus attention on existing programs and services and how people can access these services and get involved.

Use the fellowship hour of your congregation as a time to discuss child and family issues and your involvement in them. Frequently mention children's needs for child care during your worship service.

Service

Offer Support to Organizations!

Organizations can always use help! Volunteer at your congregation's or another local child care center or after-school sports or tutoring program. Your time, talent, caring, and presence are invaluable assets that children need.

Organize a work day at a local child care center or after-school program.

Organize a fundraising activity to benefit a child care program, or **set up a scholarship fund** in the congregation to help parents pay for child care if they cannot afford it.

Arrange for parenting classes. Find out about community groups that offer parenting classes and publicize them or plan a series of six-week parenting class in your congregation. Find speakers, such as pediatricians, teachers, and professionals in early childhood education.

Arrange a Parents' Day Out to support parents at home who need free time for errands, doctor's appointments, and the like.

Within your congregation **form a team that would help neighborhood parents in caring for their child/children** by tutoring, teaching them a skill, or engaging in a sport or recreational activity. Building relationships as caring neighbors reminds everyone that you are part of the "village," which is helping to raise that child.

Organize volunteers in your congregation to serve as a Child Care Response Team. Ask volunteers to list available days and times when they can be on call to assist families with child care emergencies (e.g., to care for a sick child when parents cannot leave work). Establish a phone tree to get the response team ready for the work ahead.

Start a Child Care or After-School Program!

Consider whether your congregation is able to provide a child care program in your facilities. *Partners in Family Child Care—Opportunities for Outreach: A Guide for Religious Congregations* (to order, see page 107) offers a guide for assessing your congregation's resources and capabilities.

Develop an after-school program or drop-in center for children and youths.

Adopt a local child care, Head Start, or community youth center. Donate toys, new or used equipment, or a collection of money from your congregation. Offer to assist with community relations for the organization.

Develop Youth Leadership!

Organize a congregational service corps among your teens. Your youth program can coordinate this initiative, which will acknowledge the gifts of young people in your congregation and enable them to provide leadership and service to your community.

Have your congregation's youth **develop a telephone friend line** to stay in touch with children who are alone at home after school or in the summer.

Advocacy

Speak Out for Justice!

Alert local government and business officials to the need for increased quality and affordable child care and after-school programs and how they can help.

Monthly, after your congregation's service, **initiate a postcard writing campaign** to city or county council members, state legislators, your congressional representative, or your senators about laws and regulations affecting families and children.

Start a child advocacy newsletter or add a child advocacy column to your church newsletter. Get on the mailing lists of several national child advocacy organizations for a steady flow of information. As it expands, your own mailing list will provide a good means of communication and a source for volunteer recruitment.

Forge Partnerships with Power and Promise!

Collaborate with other advocates. Identify organizations, schools, and child care facilities that want to do more for the children in your community. Link up to form a coalition, or join an existing interfaith, local, or state coalition that advocates for improved child care and after-school activities and programs for children.

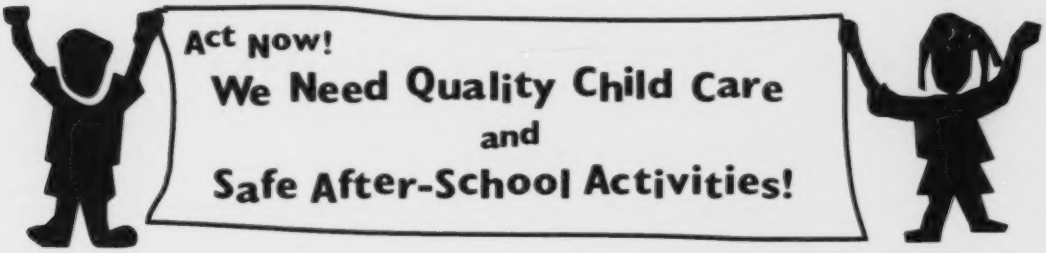
Call on the child care professionals in your own congregation and work with other congregations to take a more visible and active role in educating, volunteering, and advocating on behalf of at-risk children in your community.

Join Stand For Children. Start a chapter in your community or join an existing one. Begun in 1996, with a gathering of 300,000 children and child advocates at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., this event is now held annually on June 1 in local communities nationwide. (See Section 7 for Stand For Children contact information.)

Build Relationships with Legislators!

Adopt a legislator. Have a child advocacy or social action committee or a youth group adopt a legislator to whom they regularly write or with whom they visit. Invite the legislator to come and speak to the group and talk about current key issues affecting children and youths. Children may wish to draw pictures for the legislators offices as reminders of the children in the areas that they represent.

Meet with elected officials about issues and laws affecting children and families. Contact your denomination's public policy or social justice office and CDF for information that will assist you in this process.



Help Congress "Get the Picture" About Child Care NOW!

How? Send it to them!

- Let children in your community "speak" by designing banners, posters, and pictures to deliver the child care message to Congress.
- Be creative! Any style will do! Children of all ages and children at heart can get involved! It's a great activity for any group! *And it's easy!*

Who can participate?

- *All* children's programs, child care homes and centers, libraries, churches, community centers, and communities

Send as many as you can to the address below. *You make them—we'll take them straight to Capitol Hill in Washington!*

- Include the message "Act Now! We Need Quality Child Care and Safe After-School Activities!" on each drawing.

Mail all drawings to Child Care NOW!
25 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Questions? Call CDF's Child Care Division at 202-662-3557.
Please share this flier with everyone in your community!

Sample Letter to U.S. Senators/Representatives on the Urgent Need for Child Care

Dear [insert name of senator or representative]:

[State]'s children and families need your leadership on child care in the U.S. [Senate/House]. Time is running out for Congress to seize the opportunity to make an important investment for America's children by enacting comprehensive child care legislation.

Parents are working harder than ever to support their families and need reliable, affordable child care. Congress has taken an important first step toward helping these families. This past summer, two-thirds of the Senate voted in support of expanding funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), a program that helps states make quality child care more affordable for working parents and supports improvements in the quality of child care and after-school programs. Now, the Congress must work together in a bipartisan manner to ensure that this support leads to the passage of comprehensive child care legislation.

Affordable, quality child care and after-school activities help to ensure that children get the support they need to grow and thrive. In 1997, 65 percent of mothers with children under age 6 and 78 percent of mothers of school-age children were in the work force. These numbers will grow dramatically with changes in welfare requiring mothers of young children to work.

For too many of these families, safe and healthy child care is simply not affordable. About half of America's families with young children earn less than $35,000 per year. One out of three children whose mothers work are poor or would be if their mother did not work. In a time of economic prosperity, it is unacceptable that these families don't have the child care help that they and their children need. The nation has set three essential goals for families and children: helping families work and be self-sufficient, ensuring that children enter school ready to learn, and helping children succeed in school. If we are to achieve these goals, good child care and after school activities are a must.

[State]'s children and families cannot wait. We urge you to take action on child care and encourage the passage of a substantial increase in guaranteed funds for the Child Care Development Block Grant.

Sincerely,

Section 7

Resources for Child Advocates

As you plan your Children's Sabbath, initiate new long-term commitments, or reinvigorate your ongoing efforts to improve the lives of children, draw upon the human and material resources available to you. In addition, look to your community and state children's advocacy and social service agencies for information about child care and after-school programs, resources, and legislation. The social justice, governmental affairs, or human services divisions of your denomination or movement's national and regional offices can often provide you with resources, advocacy ideas, and policy statements to assist you in strengthening your efforts.

Following are resources and organizational contacts for various religious organizations, as well as CDF and other organizations concerned with child care.

Protestant

Resources

The following four items can be ordered from the Ecumenical Child Care Network, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Suite 405, Chicago, IL 60631, or by calling 1-800-649-5443.

- *Called to Act: Stories of Child Care Advocacy in Our Churches.* This 1986 booklet provides poignant stories concerning how churches care for children; who needs child care; how we organize the church community; becoming a child care advocate and more.
- *Helping Churches Mind the Children: A Guide for Church-Housed Child Care Programs.* This booklet provides a format and practical suggestions for assessing the need for a congregational child care program and how to initiate, publicize and resource the program.
- *Partners in Family Child Care. Opportunities for Outreach: A Guide for Religious Congregations* by Margery Freeman. This guide can assist a congregation in assessing its need and resources for supporting family child care within the local congregation and community.
- *Policy Statement on Child Day Care.* Statement issued by the governing board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA.

Children and Poverty—The Bishop's Initiative, A Church for All God's Children. This 1998 initiative and call was issued by the United Methodist Church in response to the crisis among children and the impoverished. It invites congregations to undertake specific actions to make their churches more responsive to the needs of children and their families in the church and community while providing resources for understanding this current crisis. To learn more about The Bishop's Initiative and to obtain an information packet, call 1-800-305-9857.

Contacts

American Baptist Churches
Children's Ministry and Black Church Education
PO Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482
1-800-222-3872
www.abc-em.org

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Family and Children's Ministry
PO Box 1986
Indianapolis, IN 46206
317-635-3113, ext. 342
www.homeland.org

Congress of National Black Churches, Inc.
Black Family Programs
1225 Eye St. NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20005-3914
202-371-1091
www.cnbc.org

Ecumenical Child Care Network
8765 W. Higgins, Suite 405
Chicago, IL 60631
1-800-649-5443
773-693-4040

Episcopal Church Center
Office of Children's Ministries
815 2nd Ave.
New York, NY 10017
1-800-334-7626
www.ecusa.anglican.org

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Director for Education and Program Resources
8765 West Higgins Rd.
Chicago, IL 60631
773-380-2687
www.elca.org

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
Committee on Justice for Children and Their Families
1119 Dauphine St., Suite 5
New Orleans, LA 70116
504-524-2688

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Child Advocacy Network
100 Witherspoon St.
Louisville, KY 40202
502-569-5482
www.pcusa.org

Seventh Day Adventist Children's Ministries
1250 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904
301-680-6425

Southern Baptist Child Advocacy Network
Women's Missionary Union
PO Box 8300010, 100 Missionary Ridge
Birmingham, AL 35283-0010
205-991-8100
www.wmu.com

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Promise the Children Campaign
130 Prospect St.
Cambridge, MA 02139-1813
617-868-6600
www.uusc.org

United Church of Christ
United Church Board for Homeland Ministries
700 Prospect Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44115
216-736-3282
www.ucc.org/who/ann96_4k.htm

United Methodist Child Advocacy Network
General Board of Church and Society
100 Maryland Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20002
202-488-5654

United Methodist Women
Children, Youth & Family Advocacy
475 Riverside Dr.
New York, NY 10115-0050
212-870-3766

Catholic

Resources

The U.S. Catholic Conference in Washington, D.C., offers the following nine resources. Call 1-800-235-8722 or fax 202-722-8709.

- *Putting Children and Families First: A Challenge for Our Church, Nation, and World.* A resource developed by committees on domestic social policy, international policy, and marriage and family life examines the needs of all children in an increasingly difficult world. Presents the moral and religious dimensions of caring for children.
- *A Catholic Campaign for Children: Parish Resource Manual.* In addition to the statement, *Putting Children and Families First*, this comprehensive resource includes practical planning and support materials, clip art, bulletin quotes, liturgical and preaching guides and models to help parishes integrate a focus on children and families into all aspects of parish life. A video is also available. Also in Spanish.
- *Let the Children Come to Me. A Statement on Early Childhood Care and Education.*
- "I Am Only a Child." A compelling video reflection on the situation of children in our nation and world.
- *Families: Black and Catholic, Catholic and Black.* Captures the vitality of the African American Catholic community through its poetry, music, and recounting stories and examples of family activities.
- *Parenthood.* Examines both the beauty and the challenge of parenthood and considers factors involved in making responsible decisions regarding childbearing and children. From the U.S. Bishop's Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices.
- *Political Responsibility—Proclaiming the Gospel of Life, Protecting the Least Among Us, and Pursuing the Common Good.* Discusses the individual Catholic's role as a responsible citizen and voter. This document includes the church's position on issues such as family life, the environment, immigration, and the mass media. A summary brochure and video are also available.
- *Renewing the Vision—A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry.* This 20th anniversary document responds to the new challenges and opportunities of youth ministry today. Addresses the call to personal discipleship, evangelization, and leadership.
- *Letter of the Pope to Children in the Year of the Family.* Apostolic letter from Pope John Paul II written to children to mark the end of the 1994 International Year of the Family.

Raising Kids Who Care About Themselves, About Their World, and About Each Other. By Kathleen O'Connell Chesto. Offers parents and child care providers guidelines for fostering ethics at an early age. Deals with issues of rivalry and sharing, empathy for others, motivation that sticks, lying, bullying, and peer pressure. Call the Catholic Reporter Publishing Company, Sheed & Ward, 1-800-333-7373 or fax 816-968-2292.

Contacts

Catholic Charities USA
1731 King St., Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-549-1390
www.catholiccharitiesusa.org

Catholic Health Association
445 Woodson Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63134
314-427-2500
www.chausa.org

National Catholic Education Association
1077 30th St. NW, Suite 100
Washington, DC 20007
202-337-6232
www.ncea.org

National Catholic Office for Persons with Disabilities
PO Box 29113
Washington, DC 20017
202-529-2933
www.ncpd.org

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry
3700-A Oakview Terrace NE
Washington, DC 20017
202-636-3825
www.nfcym@nfcym.com

NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
801 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Suite 460
Washington, DC 20003
202-547-5556
www.networklobby.org

U.S. Catholic Conference
Office for Domestic Social Development
3211 4th St. NE
Washington, DC 20017
202-541-3185
www.nccbuscc.org

In addition to the above organizations, most states have a state Catholic conference that coordinates the public policy concerns of the church within the state. Contact your diocesan chancery for the appropriate contact person, telephone number, and Web site.

Jewish

Resources

The American Scene, the quarterly public policy newsletter of Hadassah. 212-303-8136.

The following three resources are available from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, 2027 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036 or by calling 202-387-2800.

- "Ani V'Atah: How to Do Social Justice Programming." A video exploring how to develop successful social justice activities in your congregation, including coalition-building and advocacy.
- *Mitzvah Day Manual.* Mitzvah Day is a program that sets aside one day during the year when all congregants take part in one of several social action projects in their local community. This manual, compiled from congregations of all sizes that have conducted successful mitzvah days, includes tips on organizing your committee, bulletins, fliers, logos, budget, complete action plan, selecting projects, and prayer services.
- *Social Action Manual: A Practical Guide for Organizing and Programming Social Action in the Synagogue* by Rabbi David Saperstein. A complete guide for congregations with descriptions of resources and social action organizations. Published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism.

The following two resources are available from Women of Reform Judaism 838 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10021, call 212- 650-4051; fax 212-650-4059; or e-mail wrj@uahc.org.

- *Guidelines for Sisterhood Critical Issues Action.* This updated and comprehensive guide covers the information and steps needed for effective action on the federal, state, provincial, and local levels.
- *In Pursuit of Justice: Resolutions and Policy Statements.* A fundamental resource that includes resolutions and policy statements on critical issues and religious living adopted by Women of Reform Judaism assemblies, boards of directors and executive committees since 1915. A full subject index and a chronological listing of resolutions are provided for ease of use.

To obtain the following two resources, contact the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Press Order Dept., 838 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10021-7064, 1-888-489-8242.

- *The NFTY Tikkun Olam Program.* The North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) is the youth group of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. NFTY's Tikkun Olam program provides a set of guidelines to help lead your youth group in creating a well-rounded calendar, incorporating different types of social, educational, and action-based programs.
- *Tough Choices: Jewish Perspectives on Social Justice*, by Albert Vorspan and David Saperstein. Confronts social justice dilemmas and the hard, cutting-edge issues of our time, guided by Jewish sources and texts. Has extensive material on economic justice issues.

To obtain the following four resources, contact the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Rapaport House, 155 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010, 212-533-7800, or visit www.uscj.org/nfty on the Web.

- *Judaism and Child Welfare.* A packet concerned with the treatment of all children. Contains recent data on children and a listing of Jewish educational materials published by the United Synagogue Commission on Social Action and Public Policy.
- Tikkun Olam publications also include a series of pamphlets on social action issues, including "116 Practical Mitzvah Suggestions" by Danny Siegel (Youth Dept., phone ext. 2319).
- "Resolutions." A pamphlet containing positions on Conservative movement issues, topics of Jewish concern, and public policy matters adopted by the United Synagogue at its 1995 biennial convention. (Department of Special Projects, phone ext. 2618).
- *Shabbat Shalom.* A family guide to help parents and young children (Preschool–Grade 4) celebrate Shabbat together on Friday night (Education Dept., phone ext. 2507).

No Kidding Around! America's Young Activists Are Changing Our World by Wendy Schaetzel Lesko. More examples of young people's involvement in policy making. Contact: Information USA, PO Box E, Kensington, MD 20895, 301-942-6303.

Statement on Quality Child Care. Women's League for Conservative Judaism, 48 East 74th St., New York, NY 10021, 212-628-1600.

Contacts

American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th St.
New York, NY 10022
212-751-4000
www.ajc.org

B'nai B'rith Center for Public Policy
1640 Rhode Island Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-857-6545
cpp@bnaibrith.org
www.bnaibrith.org/cpp

Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education
261 W. 35th St., Floor 12A
New York, NY 10001
212-268-4210
www.caje.org

Council of Jewish Federations
Washington Action Office
1640 Rhode Island Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-785-5900

Hadassah
50 West 58th St.
New York, NY 10019
212-303-8136
arutkin@compuserve.com
www.hadassah.org

Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services
Commission on Education and Jewish Life
120 57th St.
New York, NY 10019
212-582-9100

Jewish Childcare Association
575 Lexington Ave.
New York, NY 10022
212-371-1313

Jewish Council for Public Affairs
443 Park Ave. South, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10016-7322
212-684-6950
www.jcpany.org

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
Church Rd. and Greenwood Ave.
Wyncote, PA 19095
215-887-1988
www.shamash.org/jrf

Jewish Women International
(formerly B'nai B'rith Women)
1828 L St. NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-857-1300

National Council of Jewish Women, Inc.
838 Fifth Ave.
New York, NY 10021
212-249-0100
www.ncjw.org

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
2027 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-387-2800
www.rj.org/rac

Union of American Hebrew Congregations
838 Fifth Ave.
New York, NY 10021-7064
212-650-4000
www.rj.org/uahc

United Jewish Appeal–Federation of New York
Governmental Affairs Office
130 East 59th St.
New York, NY 10022
212-836-1736
solowayr@aol.com

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rapaport House
155 Fifth Ave.
New York, NY 10010
212-533-7800
www.uscj.org

Women of Reform Judaism
838 Fifth Ave.
New York, NY 10021
212-650-4051
wrj@uahc.org.
www.rj.org/wrj

Women's League for Conservative Judaism
48 East 74th St.
New York, NY 10021
212-628-1600
www.jtsa.edu/wlcj

Muslim

Resources and Contacts

Teaching About Islam and Muslims in the Public School Classroom: A Handbook for Educators. This 117-page teacher's manual provides a wealth of information and practical application ideas about the basic beliefs, religious obligations, and Muslim society including such topics as daily life, gender and family issues and contemporary issues. Contact:

Council on Islamic Education
PO Box 20186
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
714-839-2929
cietrc@earthlink.net

IQRA' Educational Resource Guide. This catalogue includes textbooks and instructional materials for the Islamic faith and culture. Contact:

IQRA' Mail Order Service
7450 Skokie Blvd.
Skokie, IL 60077
1-800-521-4272
www.iqra.org

Astrolabe Pictures. Muslim resources for children, teachers, and others interested in this faith tradition.
585 Grove St., Suite 300
Herndon, VA 20170
1-800-392-7876
www.astrolabepictures.com

American Muslim Council (AMC). Works to serve the interests of the Muslim communities and families in the United States while also seeking to educate the American public regarding Islam, its culture and social concerns of children and families. To obtain its monthly newsletter, call 202-789-2262 or 202-789-2550.

Muslim Education Council (MEC), an organization of professional educators involved in disseminating information to school administrators, teachers, students, and parents about Islam and the cultures and peoples of the Middle East. Call 703-759-7698 or fax 703-759-9461.

Child Care Resource Organizations

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
1509 16th St. NW
Washington, DC 20036
1-800-424-2460 or 202-232-8777
www.naeyc.org

- Offers *Congregations and Child Care: A Self Study for Churches and Synagogues and Their Early Childhood Programs.* Dorothy Steele, editor. This guide complements the accreditation process offered by NAEYC for child care centers.

National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
206 6th Ave., Suite 900
Des Moines, IA 50309-4018
515-282-8192 or 1-800-359-3817
www.assoc-mgmt.com/users/nafcc/
nafcc@assoc-mgmt.com

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)
1319 F St. NW, Suite 810
Washington, DC 20004-1106
202-393-5501

National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force
733 15th St. NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
202-737-7700

National Head Start Association
1651 Prince St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-739-0875
www.nhsa.org

National Child Care Information Center
301 Maple Ave. West, Suite 602
Vienna, VA 22180
agoldstein@acf.dhhs.gov
http://eric ps.ed.uiuc.edu/nccic/nccichome.html

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From CDF

On-Line Resources

- CDF Web site: www.childrensdefense.org
- Children's Sabbaths e-mail: cdfsabbaths@childrensdefense.org
- Free CDF computer listserv subscriptions

Contact CDF Web site—www.childrensdefense.org—to learn how you can subscribe to the following listservs: Child Care Advocacy E-Mail Network; Child Health Information Project; Legislative Update, Student Leadership Network for Children; and CDF Web Site Alert.

Child Care Resources

The following can be ordered from CDF Fulfillment, 202-662-3652.

Child Care Challenges. The latest data on child care costs and other indicators are provided in individual state profiles. A valuable resource for every child care advocate!

Child Care NOW! Organizer's Kit. Provides helpful information and practical suggestions for how you can get involved in the 1998 Child Care NOW! campaign in order to get the message to Congress that America's families need quality child care they can afford.

State of America's Children Yearbook 1998. An annual analysis of the status of children includes new statistics on child care and development, child poverty and family income, as well as analyses of maternal and child health, education, violence against and by children, child abuse and neglect, and adolescent pregnancy prevention and youth development. Each section offers valuable statistics, as well as descriptions of model programs and analyses of important federal- and state-level trends. Issued annually in March.

Locked Doors: States Struggling to Meet the Child Care Needs of Low-Income Working Families. This 1998 report profiles the urgent need for additional investments in child care by assessing data from all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Key Facts about Child Care and Early Education: A Briefing Book. This 1997 edition provides basic facts about child care, Head Start, and early education, with state-specific information.

Helping Parents Work and Children Succeed: A Guide to Child Care and the 1996 Welfare Act. A detailed description of child care provisions in the 1996 welfare law and key implementation issues.

Working Together for Children: Head Start and Child Care Partnerships. How Head Start and child care programs can work together to improve care for children.

CDF Reports. CDF's newsletter is a one-of-a-kind monthly report that brings you in-depth news and information from Washington and around the country on the people and events shaping children's lives. Child care is a major focus in 1998. Subscriptions and back issues available.

Faith-Based Resources

Children's Sabbath Video: "National Observance of Children's Sabbaths: Raising Voices, Linking Hands for Children." This 9-minute video features highlights from past events, as well as interviews with a variety of religious leaders. Inspires communities of faith to participate in the Children's Sabbaths and strengthen service and advocacy efforts for children.

Bible with Child Advocates' Concordance. For faithful advocates, CDF presents a New Revised Standard Version Bible with a topical child advocates' concordance. This handsomely bound Bible in genuine leather contains a special concordance with selected verses on parents, children, social justice, and other child-related topics. Pocket-sized, it measures 4 1/2" x 6 1/2."

"A Prayer for Children." This moving poem by Ina Hughs is read by CDF President Marian Wright Edelman, with footage of children. A very powerful motivational video! 3 min.

Guide My Feet: Prayers and Meditations on Loving and Working for Children by Marian Wright Edelman. Personal reflections on the joys, struggles, and rituals of parenting and working for children. Provides resources for public worship as well as private devotion. Beacon Press, 1995.

Welcome the Child: A Child Advocacy Guide for Churches by Shannon P. Daley and Kathleen Guy. This guide for clergy, staff, and everyone involved in children's ministries provides practical information for involving the congregation in child advocacy. From CDF and Friendship Press, 1994.

"Welcoming the Children." This video shows how local congregations respond to urgent needs of children by using their own resources and forming partnerships with other groups. Ideal for use by a single congregation or multiple congregations to plan strategies for helping children. From CDF and Friendship Press, 1994.

Prophetic Voices: Black Preachers Speak on Behalf of Children. A unique collection of sermons by 21 preachers representing 13 denominations. These sermons affirm the value of children and remind adults of their moral obligations to help and nurture all children. Foreword by Renita J. Weems; opening letter by CDF President Marian Wright Edelman. 74 pp., 1993.

Videos from the "Great Preachers Series" of CDF's annual Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry. This series includes: Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Rev. Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor, Dr. Vashti McKenzie, Dr. Gardner Taylor, Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Dr. John Maguire, Dr. Renita Weems, and others.

Start a Children's Movement in Your Community

Stand For Children
1834 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 1-800-663-4032 or 202-234-0095
Fax: 202-234-0217
E-mail: tellstand@stand.org
Web site: www.stand.org

- Begun in 1996, this organization, which operates under the aegis of CDF, helps grassroots children's activists build chapters that improve the lives of children in their communities through successful policy change, awareness-raising, and service initiatives. To obtain information on forming a chapter, visit the Stand Web site or call Stand. June 1 is Stand For Children Day all across America!

1998 National Observance of Children's Sabbaths Evaluation Form

Let us know how you celebrated the Children's Sabbath!

Please detach and return this evaluation form to: The National Observance of Children's Sabbaths
25 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Name

Congregation

Religious affiliation

Address (indicate home or office)

City, State, Zip

Telephone (indicate day or evening) Fax E-mail

Web site

a. How did your congregation observe the Children's Sabbath? What activities, services, or events were held, and approximately how many persons participated in each?

Please circle all that apply to your celebration.

1. Worship service, liturgy, or prayer service. Participants: _____
2. Single congregation, ecumenical gathering, interfaith service. Participants: _____
3. Educational programs with children, youth, adults, intergenerational. Participants: _____
4. Service and outreach activities. Participants: _____
5. Awareness-raising activities (marches, festivals). Participants: _____
6. Other (please describe) _____ . Participants: _____

b. Briefly describe any or all of these events (use additional paper if necessary).

c. Please rate the Children's Sabbaths manual sections.

1. Very useful
2. Somewhat useful
3. Not very useful
4. Didn't use
5. Plan to use at a later date

___ Section 3: Planning and Promoting Your Children's Sabbath
___ Section 4: Worship Resources
___ Section 5: Educational Resources for All Ages
___ Section 6: Children's Sabbath in Action
___ Section 7: Resources for Child Advocates

d. **Was this multi-faith edition *more or less* beneficial for your planning than previous manuals? Please explain.**

e. **What other resources or changes would you like to see in the Children's Sabbaths manual?**

f. **How will your congregation incorporate the activities and recommitment to children generated by your Children's Sabbath into the ongoing life of your congregation this year? Be specific.**

g. **Did other congregations in your community hold Children's Sabbaths? Tell us about them, if possible.**

h. **How did you learn about the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths? (circle all that apply):**

1. Denomination
2. Word of mouth
3. CDF
4. Internet
5. Ecumenical organization/community coalition (specify which) _____
6. Media coverage (specify) _____
7. Other _____

i. **How did you publicize your Children's Sabbath events? (circle all that apply):**

1. Print coverage (name of publication; send clipping, if possible) _____
2. Broadcast coverage (name of television/radio station) _____
3. Denominational newspaper _____
4. Bulletin or congregational newsletter _____
5. Other _____
6. Did not actively publicize the Children's Sabbath

j. **Are you interested in purchasing from he Children's Sabbaths video to assist you in your promotional efforts? (Circle One)**

1. Yes 2. No 3. Unsure

k. **In what ways can CDF provide you with additional support in your efforts on behalf of children?**

l. **What individuals do you know or what professional networks are you a part of that might be interested in receiving material on the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths?**

Name

Organization Denomination/Affiliation

Address City State Zip

Telephone E-Mail Fax

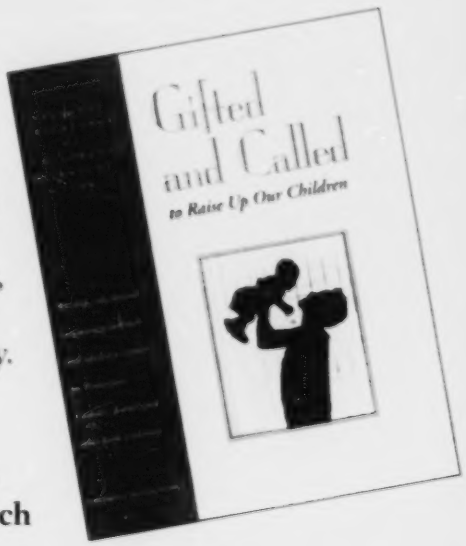
Join the Children's Defense Fund's Seventh Annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths

Child Care Now! Gifted and Called to Raise Up Our Children

October 16-18, 1998

The **National Observance of Children's Sabbaths** unites thousands of religious congregations and organizations in speaking out and acting faithfully on behalf of children and families. This year's National Observance of Children's Sabbaths is focusing on safe, nurturing child care for ***all*** children, whether in homes, in centers, or in after-school and summer programs.

The following resources from CDF will help you plan a successful and memorable Children's Sabbath:



1998 Children's Sabbaths Resource Manual

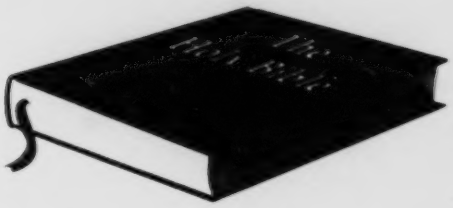
Learn how to plan and promote your Children's Sabbath with this easy-to-use, single-volume manual. Includes practical activities for adults and children, worship services for Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and other faith traditions, lesson plans, and resources for follow-up activities within every faith community.

Manual Cost:

1 - 4 manuals	**@ $6 each**	**20 - 29 manuals**	**@ $3 each**
5 - 9 "	**@ $5 each**	**30 - 49 "**	**@ $2.50 each**
10 - 19 "	**@ $4 each**	**50 - 99 "**	**@ $2 each**
		100 +	**@ $1.50 each**

_] Send us _____ manuals @ $_____ each.

▸ Bible with Child Advocates' Concordance



For faithful advocates, CDF presents a New Revised Standard Version Bible with a topical child advocates' concordance. This handsomely bound Bible in genuine leather contains a special concordance with selected verses on parents, children, social justice, and other child-related topics. Measures $4^{1/2}$" x $6^{1/2}$". $25.

❑ Send us _____ Bibles. (Call for bulk pricing)

▸ Children's Sabbaths Video, The National Observance of Children's Sabbaths: *Raising Voices, Linking Hands for Children*

A 9-minute video featuring highlights from past events as well as interviews with a variety of religious leaders. Inspires communities of faith to participate in the Children's Sabbaths and strengthen service and advocacy efforts for children. $5.95.

❑ Send us _____ videos.

▸ June 1998 *CDF Reports*

CDF's monthly newsletter provides an in-depth look at how congregations across the country are preparing for the upcoming National Observance of Children's Sabbaths. Includes tips on making a long-term difference in children's lives and advice on organizing Children's Sabbaths. June Special Report: $2.50. To subscribe, call 202-662-3607.

❑ Send us _____ copies of Special Report.

ORDERING INFORMATION

In addition to the stated price, include $2 for shipping and handling of the first item ordered and $1 for each additional item. For bulk orders of 10 or more, please call 202-662-3643 to determine the price for cost effective shipping to your location. Washington, D.C., residents must add 5.75% sales tax.

❑ Bill my credit card. (Check one below.)

❑ Visa ❑ Master ❑ Discover ❑ American Express

_____ _____

Card number Expiration date

_____

Cardholder signature

Subtotal order $_____

+ shipping $_____

Total $_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Church/Synagogue/Mosque/Organization (if not part of address)

_____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ E-Mail: _____

Mail order with payment to: CDF Fulfillment

25 E Street NW, Washington, DC 20001, Phone: 202-662-3652, Fax: 202-628-8333

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National Observance of Children's Sabbaths Advisory Committee

Mr. Alan Ades
President
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

The Rev. David Beckmann
Executive Director
Bread for the World

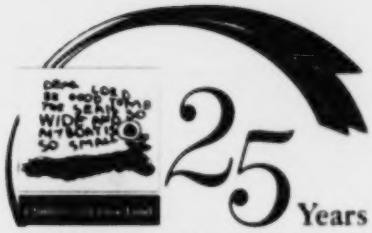
The Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell
General Secretary
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling
Executive Director
Federation of Reconstructionist Congregations and Havurot

The Most Rev. James W. Malone
Former Bishop of Youngstown
Diocese of Youngstown

The Most Rev. Rembert G. Weakland, OSB
Archbishop of Milwaukee
Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Rabbi Eric Yoffie
President
Union of American Hebrew Congregations



LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND.

25 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20001
202–628–8787
www.childrensdefense.org